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FEBRUARY 1960



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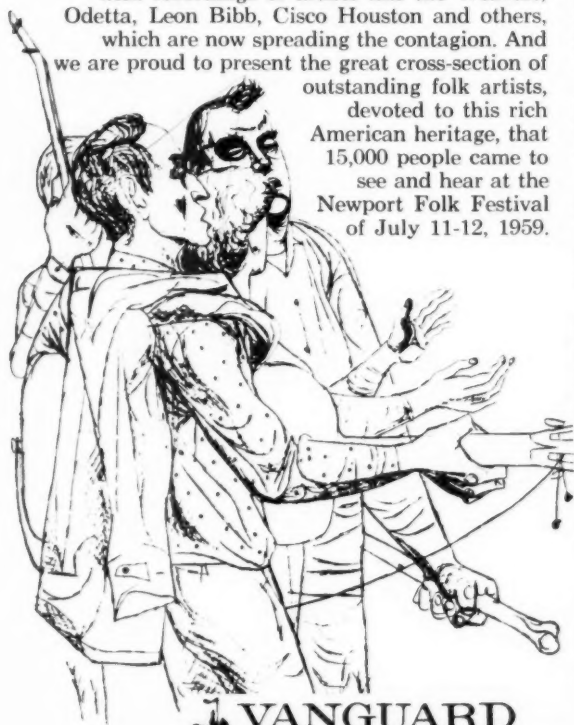
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ON THE COVER: Australian-born Joan Sutherland, the coloratura sensation whose first records are reviewed on page 434.

Writing Songs

By NED ROREM

WORDS PROVOKE the musical mood in a number of essentially mysterious ways. It might be assumed that the most logical shape of a song is that which conforms exactly to the shape of the poem. Though it cannot rhyme—as poets understand the word—musical meter can literally illustrate poetic meter: four stanzas of poetry can be imitated by four “stanzas” of identical music. The difference is in the words, which are not the same for each stanza. But a free adaptation is accomplished by ignoring stanza divisions of a poem, and substituting others, or even fashioning a long non-repetitive melodic line which weaves the stanzas into a single continuous stream.

On the other hand, a musician may choose *free* verse and subject it to rigid patterns of musical repetition, imposing a new dimension extraneous to the music; or he may allow the free verse to carry him along according to its own rules as he himself carried the strict verse in the previous example. Whatever happens, the poem and music will always have a common superstructure.

A composer examines verses with an intention of determining *what* manner of music will coincide with *what* words in *what* section of the poem. He seeks “highs” and “lows”, and points of intensity toward which to direct emphasis. Most likely he will first decide upon the

The first half of this article appeared in the November, 1959, issue. Presumably the author needs no introduction. He currently holds the Slee Professorship in composition at the University of Buffalo. For the special interest of New Yorkers, several of Mr. Rorem's songs will be presented on a program of “Music for Voice by Americans” at Town Hall on the 8th of this month.

musical climax by looking for a group of words that sum up the poet's message, hoping among them to find one with dramatic connotation, and also a vowel that will sound good on a low or high note. Use of a note in extreme vocal registers is the commonest method for producing effective climax in song.

Particular types of voices have a particular tessitura that is more expressive than others. We assume the composer is writing for a particular voice. Just as he would know that the musical soliloquy of a girl in love is not suitable to a bass voice, nor a warrior's marching tune appropriate for a typical soprano, so he would probably not arrange the most "telling" moment of his bass line to lie in an upper and strained tessitura, nor allow the high point of the coloratura's song to fall on middle C.

The climactic note or phrase of a song is usually one that is the result of accumulated tension; contrast is calculated and achieved by removing this note from the normal tessitura of speech.

I am not sure that high and low have our implication of tension and release in other cultures, but with western vocal music audiences find satisfaction in well-contrived high or low endings, soft or loud endings, endings of contrast, endings that sound difficult (even when they're not). Audiences like all endings: they feel that the virtuoso has run a risk and come out victorious. And they like to be sure when the end has come, so as to know when to applaud.

It is no concession to be considerate of public appeal in a final stroke that provides extreme notes for a singer. All art must contain climax. In song it appears when a vocal line arrives at the specific and inevitable point toward which it has been moving. Since a composer feels safer in knowing where he's going, before he begins

composition he calculates this point of crisis, insuring the direction of the road which will lead him—both forward and backward—to his over-all form. This over-all form is what gives contour to melody.

Melody, of course, is the primary ingredient of song: simply say the word and it suggests the human voice! But what is a great melody? Can a musician *learn* to write one?

Great melodists are not necessarily great composers. Nor is it prerequisite of a composer to be able to write unforgettable tunes. We associate the continuous arching flow that is melody not with Beethoven, Debussy, and Stravinsky, but with Tchaikovsky, Ravel, and Puccini, from whom the well-proportioned long line seems to emerge painlessly. Yet the first-named are widely thought to be more *important*.

A composer's inborn talent for making good tunes probably determines the medium upon which he will concentrate. Those, like Beethoven, who have difficulty in evolving attractive melodic material to be developed into a work of multiple variations, are inclined to center their interest in larger instrumental forms where evolution of material is of itself the keynote. Others, like Puccini, who seem disinclined to imagine tunes without words, and whose tunes are born as spacious lines all but complete in themselves, will probably concentrate on the vocal mediums. Still others, like Schubert and especially Mozart, directed their melodic gifts to every field.

The components of good melody can be analyzed from a purely technical standpoint; hence a musician of average creative ability is capable of inventing one. But that special "something" that makes it memorable, endows it of mysterious

embodiment with power to move us, begs analysis. No one, not even the composer, can tell you much about it.

There are all sorts of good melodies, ranging from a four-note motive to extended lines continuing with an apparently inexhaustible quantity of renewal, breath and variety, yet always related to the original seed from which they flowered. These many kinds of melody share in common the gratifying proportions that are musical fulfillment.

We've noted earlier the importance of the words being understood. We've suggested that only certain vowel sounds are practical in extreme registers. One vowel sound is practical when it is easier than another for the singer to produce, and therefore for the hearer to comprehend. For example, "ah" and "i" are more comfortable high and low than "oh" and "e". An intelligent composer will not choose the vowel *i* for an extreme note, without good reason, just because it's easy; nor conversely use an impossible *e* in a similar place because the atmosphere seems to require it.

An off-beat vocal effect can have justification; but the composer has only to try singing it for himself to discover what he imagined dramatic is *that* or, on the other hand, ineffectual and ridiculous. What is more, he should be able to sing *everything* he writes no matter how grim his voice sounds to others. The music we best understand is the music we make for ourselves, and no composer can go far wrong if he estimates his vowels and consonants and prosody and all other attributes of song, by letting them flow naturally from his own vocal cords while in the act of composing. What *he* can do, his performer can do; but if he writes only what is theoretically performable he is in for some severe jolts.

Setting words to music with a skill for declamation is imagined by many to be a rare gift, yet it is little more than notating words according to the natural laws of speech inflection. Impeccable declamation is, however, no more indispensable to song than assigning practical vowels to appropriate notes. A poem, after all, is not "real life", and a song is even less so.

In this *distillation* of life distortions are conceivable when they serve an expressive gesture. If a composer is going to distort the metrical values of a poem he should have good reason for risking loss of verbal comprehension.

The words of art song are doubly hard to understand, even when they follow prosodic patterns, because the voice is taken out of normal speaking range. In jazz and folk songs, words are understood without effort, for these tunes are generally built within the limits of an octave, and the singer merely transposes this octave to his own speech range.

In verse, as in the prose of speech, phrases have an innate rise and fall which is rendered in the same way by most readers. In music, regular fidelity to this rise and fall makes for monotony, yet occasional consideration of it for the sake of expressivity is pertinent. The composer may disregard the effects of natural language for musical reasons, and such departures are part of the act of composition.

Now comes the question of accompaniment. Accompanists avoid the word and call themselves pianists. They feel—and perhaps they are right—that the best songs have a supple give-and-take between piano and voice, that these instruments are of equal worth, and that an insensitive pianist may ruin the achievement of the greatest vocalist.

Accompaniment is most usually a regulated pattern over which a voice moves. This is as true of Schubert's songs as of his piano sonatas wherein the voice is not human. The art of accompaniment has evolved greatly since the troubadours sang their tunes above a simple strumming, and instrumental sounds that used merely to sustain a voice are often now on equal terms with it, weaving in and out of, sometimes overwhelming the vocal line. Piano parts of Debussy's late songs are virtuoso pieces: voice and keyboard have independent developments nearly indicating a chamber duet rather than what we normally think of as a song.

Accompaniment reduced to its lowest terms does not, however, exist as a piece of music in itself. A good vocal part, on the other hand, has an urgency that will

not crumble when performed alone. The composer may imagine that he conceives a work for voice and piano, and even create an elaborate web of canonic imitation between the two, but under the limited definition of song as we have discussed it, it is music for voice *with* piano.

IV

In the end, composition is *choice*, nothing more—choosing the right note for the right place at the right time. Each choice presents alternative decisions, other possibilities. But choices are not always conscious. We have said that inspiration should be taken for granted, and, when the tools of craft are well in hand, awareness of them has less importance than what they produce.

The majority of song-composers write quickly: they have something to start with, the skeleton exists. If the composer has a good day this skeleton will acquire an inevitable flesh. He does not know the origin of this flesh, nor is he necessarily aware of its sequential growth.

His very first songs may have been written from sheer instinct without practical knowledge of the human voice (except that which sang within him), or of musical form (except that which the poem seemed to indicate). Some of these songs can be quite good indeed, but this *goodness* troubles an untrained composer when he inspects his product objectively and asks *why* it is good. Probing the nature of song, eventual study of form and vocal possibilities found in other people's music, will not inhibit but release his ability. He will still write with the same "inspiration" and for the same reasons, but with the assurance of an intervening knowledge without which he would have stood still.

Usually the so-called *born* song writer's early pieces have "worked" by instinctive calculation. For the rest of his life he tries to make tangible the fortunate formulas which originally appeared to him without his calling them. His young songs came to life, as it were, from the exuberance of first love. First love is unexpected revelation, and seldom recurs except to saints and artists.

Song makers are so often reproached for not writing a "grateful" vocal line, or for

misrepresenting a text, that they can assume listeners do not hear as they do. There are as many reactions to music as there are people alive to hear it. The composer desires to bridge the gap between private conception and public reception. He does so by learning a recipe for only indispensable ingredients. Later, if he is still around, he does it by teaching his interpreter to hear as he hears.

We have mentioned that some principles of song-writing can become obsessive, radically distorted. These excesses and distortions are successful when their purpose is not esthetically gratuitous. The church music of Palestrina and his colleagues was less bound to words as literature than to their use for evoking the glory of God through choral counterpoint. A single syllable was strung out to such length that it could not be understood as having literal connotation. Couperin in his Wednesday *Tenebrae* Service, following the traditions of liturgical chant, actually set to music the Hebrew letters of the alphabet which introduce the stanzas of Jeremiah. This use of a letter is not for the letter as such, but for a musical, and therefore religious, sound.

A modern example which gives a *total* interpretation of the text at the expense of the comprehension of individual phrases, is the setting by Pierre Boulez of René Char's *Le marteau sans Maître*. In it the word values are purposely so distorted, and the vocal line so unnatural, that the most agile voice with the best diction in the world could not give (nor is it meant to give) literal sense to the words. It is Boulez' intention to interpret the poet and not the poem. He does so by portraying, in his way, a musical *feeling* for the poet, using the words only as a frame into which sound is placed.

The opposite intention can be found in Virgil Thomson's settings of Gertrude Stein. The speech values are so exact, the flow of the melodic line so natural, the accompaniments so functional, that there is no question of each word's being understood in the significance given by the poet. Similarly, Satie's music on the prose of Plato allows the words an ease of speech,

(Continued on page 492)

Portrait of an artist— Brouwenstijn on records

LAST NOVEMBER the Chicago Lyric Opera gave two performances of Leoš Janáček's opera "*Jenufa*", with the Dutch soprano Gré Brouwenstijn making her North American debut in the title role. Although this singer has achieved great fame in Europe, she was until then hardly known in this country. Visitors to the Bayreuth or Glyndebourne festivals may have reported on her Elisabeth, Sieglinde, or Fidelio, but to most American opera enthusiasts Gré Brouwenstijn was little more than an unpronounceable name. When, about a year ago, Epic issued her recording of d'Albert's opera "*Tiefland*", there was at least a possibility to hear the voice, albeit in a rather quaint and generally unknown score.

Gré Brouwenstijn's debut in Chicago did not give a complete impression of what this singer is capable of achieving on the operatic stage; the role is not a spectacular one and it does not even give much opportunity for vocal display. That Brouwenstijn consented to make her debut in such a part is typical of this singer, whose love for Janáček's opera made all personal

glamor seem unimportant. In the Chicago performances the soprano did, however, impress audiences with her great sincerity in an utterly moving portrayal of Jenufa (see page 330 in last month's issue).

Because Americans still have not had the opportunity to see and hear Gré Brouwenstijn's interpretations in the Italian and German repertoires, for which she is so rightly renowned, it may be interesting to throw some more light on this extraordinary vocal actress.

Perhaps it would be best to call Gré Brouwenstijn a combination of the "*jugendlich-dramatische*" and "*lyrico spinto*" types of soprano. As opposed to her darker-voiced "*hoch-dramatische*" colleagues, who find roles like Brünnhilde and Isolde in their repertoires, the "*jugendlich-dramatische*" soprano is the typical singer of the lighter Wagner parts, like Senta, Elisabeth, Elsa, Sieglinde, and Eva, and of most soprano parts in Weber's operas (many of the lighter Wagner parts mentioned above are all too often sung by *hoch-dramatische* sopranos of the Flagstad or Nilsson type, where a soprano like

No stranger to old ARG subscribers, Bodo Igesz is presently on the faculty of the Juilliard School of Music, where he is assistant stage director for the opera theater. He also contributes music and ballet criticism to the *Algemeen Handelsblad* in Amsterdam. All of the recordings mentioned in this article,

with the exception of the Epic "*Tiefland*", are issued on the Philips label and are available in the United States only by import. Certain of these recordings have been released more than once; the numbers given are the recent ones listed in "*The World's Encyclopaedia of Recorded Music*".

By BODO ICESZ

Rysanek or Brouwenstijn was what the composer had in mind for these roles). The realm of the "lyrico spinto", of course, covers most of the Verdi repertoire. For a singer who can master both the *jugendlich-dramatische* and the *lyrico spinto* sopranos and—which is more rarely encountered—who can make the right stylistic difference between those two categories, a wide range of operatic roles is readily available.

As indicated, Brouwenstijn's voice is basically a lyric one. The middle register, especially, has a beautiful luminous quality, while in the last few years the top has gained strength and a new brightness. Her voice is an ideal instrument for passages of ecstatic excitement, like Sieglinde's in the third act of "*Die Walküre*", while in more lyric passages, like Desdemona's *Ave Maria*, it can sound hauntingly beautiful and infinitely moving. In the past there have been occasional periods during which the soprano's performances were hampered by a tendency to sing flat, but at present she seems to have overcome these difficulties.

Gré Brouwenstijn's innate sense of phrasing is one of her greatest assets. She is, indeed, a musician among singers. How often doesn't one hear singers with quite beautiful voices ruin the most exquisite vocal line by their careless phrasing? Brouwenstijn's fine phrasing finds its root not only in her musicianship, but also in her awareness of drama and the great sincerity of her performances. Far from having only vocal merits, Gré Brouwen-



Brouwenstijn as Desdemona in the Covent Garden production of "*Otello*" (Photo by Houston Roger)

stijn is at all times completely believable on stage. The fact that she is tall and has a striking stage figure of course contributes to this, but mainly it is her *approach* to opera.

Awareness of drama and utmost sincerity are the qualities that make Gré Brouwenstijn's performances most memorable. Especially in the Italian repertoire, many prima donnas have made us accustomed to a kind of acting in which they rely upon a few stock gestures supposedly expressing "grief", "hope", or "despair". Tyrone Guthrie, in his recent book *A Life in the Theatre* (McGraw-Hill) relating his directorial experiences in opera, says: "This sort of technique has several advantages: it can be taught, and, unlike many artistic techniques, it can be learned by a process of careful and conscientious imitation. . . But it can never be more than second best. The rules enable the artist, as it were, to accompany the score, to remain consistent with the composer's intentions, but not to interpret it in the uniquely personal way which raises craft to the status of art." Brouwenstijn is one of the few exceptions to the rule. In her interpretations she *does* raise craft to the status of art. She really lives the char-

Left to right, Brouwenstijn as Leonora in "Forza" (Particam Photo), Sieglinda in "Die Walküre" (Liselette Strelow Photo), Eva in "Die Meistersinger" (Siegfried Lauterwasser Photo)



acters she portrays and makes her dramatic points by whatever fits those characters, never by any stock gesture. There are worlds of difference between her frail, touching Desdemona, her decisive and heroic Fidelio, her simple Jenufa, and her regal Elisabetta. Moreover, during her performances one never thinks of Brouwenstijn's Fidelio, Brouwenstijn's Jenufa, or Brouwenstijn's Aida, but one has always the impression of seeing Beethoven's Fidelio, Janáček's Jenufa, and Verdi's Aida.

On records, of course, Brouwenstijn is at a slight disadvantage in that the visual aspect of her performance cannot be captured. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why her records often give the impression of being not quite on the level of her performances. True, some of her recordings give a good idea of what she sounds like, but often one just misses the personal touch which does not quite seem to come over. Typically for this singer, her best records are those on which the stage reality is re-created by the presence of another singer.

It will perhaps be helpful at this point to review Gré Brouwenstijn's career and to enumerate her records, which will have to serve until the time when the soprano may follow up her Chicago debut by other appearances in this country.

Gré Brouwenstijn was born in 1916 in Den Helder, The Netherlands. After studies in Amsterdam she made her operatic debut as the First Lady in a performance of Mozart's "Die Zauberflöte". This was before 1940, when the Netherlands did not yet have an established opera company. With no possibilities for per-

forming in opera available, Gré Brouwenstijn joined the chorus of Radio Hilversum, was soon entrusted with solo parts, and gradually built up a local reputation. During the war a permanent opera company was founded in The Netherlands. Out of this institution the Nederlandse Opera was formed. Brouwenstijn made her debut with the latter company in 1946 as Giulietta in "Les Contes d'Hoffmann". A reminder of that occasion, although the record was made some three years later, will be found on Phi 312 095 NF, where the soprano is joined by the mezzo Lidy van der Veen in the Barcarolle, *Belle Nuit, O Nuit d'Amour*.

In the early years of her career (1946-51) Holland heard Brouwenstijn as Leonora ("Il Trovatore"), Santuzza, Tosca, Rezia, Ariadne, Rosalinde, Agathe, Senta and Jenufa (in '51 under Kubelik). Here, already, the soprano's wide range of repertoire becomes apparent. Although her Ariadne and Senta were much praised, her real successes at that time were in the Italian and the lighter German repertoires. On the other side of Phi 312 095 NF a fine example of her singing is to be found—the *Miserere* from "Il Trovatore" with, in the background, the voice of the Dutch tenor Frans Vroons as Manrico.

Tosca has always been one of Brouwenstijn's great roles. By singing the part without some of the emotional exaggerations to which many singers have made us so accustomed, and by stressing the human qualities of this 19th-century prima donna, Brouwenstijn makes all the more impression with her portrayal. Her interpretation has deepened over the years and her singing of the Puccini music is truly

glorious. A beautiful, touching account of *Vissi d'arte*, as she sang it in the late forties, is offered on Phi N 11169 G. Her singing of the role is at present perhaps even more convincing than it is on that record, and after having heard her sing Tosca recently I wonder how long it will be before Manon Lescaut will be added to her repertoire. The various sides of Manon's character offer an artist with Brouwenstijn's perception many more interesting possibilities for interpretation than the rather one-dimensional Tosca.

Turning over Phi N 11169 G, one finds a passionate and yet not overdone version of *Voi lo sapete, o Madre* from "*Cavalleria Rusticana*". This emotional outpouring to the ever-patient Mama Lucia has also been issued on Phi N 00119L, together with Vroons' *Vesti la giubba* and Brouwenstijn's *Ocean, du Ungeheuer*. Still later the "*Cavalleria*" and the "*Pagliacci*" were issued together, without the "*Oberon*", on Phi 402 010 NE. *Ocean, du Ungeheuer* is sung with great enthusiasm and it makes an exciting recording, not least because of the remarkable flexibility of the voice.

A good example of Brouwenstijn's Agathe is given on Phi S 06019 R, where *Wie nahte mir die Schlummer* is accompanied by the Residentie Orchestra of The Hague under its very gifted conductor Willem van Otterloo. Both soprano and conductor seem intent on giving Weber his due. Brouwenstijn's singing of the aria is very lovely, especially in the slower sections. Van Otterloo makes his fine orchestra phrase Weber's music as beautifully as Brouwenstijn does, and the result is an immensely satisfying record that may well stand as an example of how this music should be performed.

On the most recent issue, on the number mentioned above, the Weber is coupled with Beethoven's *Ah, perfido*, also sung by Brouwenstijn. Although *Ah, perfido* is certainly not representative of the way in which the soprano sings this aria or Fidelio's music at present, this is a good recording in many ways. At the time it was made Brouwenstijn's voice was perhaps still a trifle light for this dramatic aria, but her convincing delivery of the opening recitative and her sensitive

phrasing in the aria make this one of the best existing recordings. Van Otterloo and the Residentie Orchestra are exemplary in the Beethoven, too.

In the early 1950s Josef Krips conducted a new production of Verdi's "*Un Ballo in Maschera*" at the Nederlandse Opera with Brouwenstijn as Amelia and Vroons as Riccardo. These were painstakingly rehearsed and beautifully balanced performances. A short time afterwards a record with excerpts from the opera was issued (on Phi N00713 R) with the same two protagonists and the Vienna Symphony under Wilhelm Loibner. Although Loibner is not so distinguished a conductor as Krips is—at times his approach is very Teutonic—this record still benefits from the Amsterdam rehearsals and performances. It is perhaps the best record Brouwenstijn has made as yet, and nowhere on records does one get a better impression of what her performances are like. The two Amelia arias and both the great second-act duet and the short final duet are among the excerpts recorded. While the two arias are wonderful examples of her art, Brouwenstijn makes the strongest impression in the duet, *Teco io sto*. In the first part of this duet the soprano gives ample proof of her interpretative gifts, while her legato singing of the second part (*Oh qual soave brivido*) is sheer vocal delight. If Vroons' dry voice sounds somewhat out of place in the Italian repertoire, his Riccardo is sung with impeccable taste and great freshness. The voices are excellently balanced and one would wish for more records that evidence such careful preparation and such musicianship.

At the time Brouwenstijn had added Aida and Fidelio to her large repertoire. About her Fidelio I will have to say more later. Aida was a major step into the Italian repertoire, but even more of a triumph came in April of 1953, when she sang her first Desdemona in "*Otello*" with the Nederlandse Opera assisted by the Concertgebouw Orchestra under Josef Krips. There were additional performances, with Ramon Vinay as Otello, during the Holland Festivals of 1953 and

(Continued on page 484)

A voice teacher explains why the tape recorder is

The singer's lie detector

PORPORA, the greatest of singing masters, is said to have sent forth his star pupil, Farinelli, armed with but three pages of vocal exercises. Whether the legendary "Three Pages" were solfeggi or written instructions combined with music notations no one knows. No musicologist delving in the libraries of Europe ever found them. Porpora's living documents—the incomparable artists whom he taught to be representatives of the pure, grand style of vocalization—verified if not immortalized the ideals of art singing. Alas, we have no recordings of Farinelli's voice. And where are the "Three Pages"?

Still, with only a slight stretch of the imagination, we may visualize Porpora's enigmatic farewell present. Perhaps because no one is known to have seen the manuscript, the idea of a possible key to vocal perfection, which it symbolized, lives on to this day. We might call the "Three Pages" the conscience of the singer, a guide to the genuine disciple's eternal search for truth—a set of Commandments which, if obeyed, would never permit him to serve false gods, to betray Euterpe or his spouse, or to worship the golden calf and thus eventually kill his voice.

Without a doubt, Porpora was instinctively a psychologist, as all fine teachers are. He knew the inherent weaknesses of pampered, feted singers. He knew how stars, intoxicated by the magnificent sounds they emit and deafened by applause, are liable to overlook faults and accept the little self-deceiving lies that

enter through the door of vanity. Surely, the "Three Pages" served as a tape measure of technique, a lie detector for the singer who was no longer under the surveillance of the master teacher.

There is nothing mythical about the modern singer's lie detector. It is as real as only an offspring of science can be. The modern singer's lie detector is the tape recorder.

It would be a mistake, of course, to assert that this 20th-century device is infallible. When the singer listens to his own recording and attempts to analyze and criticize his work, the recorder does not lie; it tells the truth and only the truth. But what does the singer *hear*?

The genius singer cannot be measured by ordinary standards. The singer is a curious specimen, with numerous variations. He hates to be judged by amateur critics or by connoisseurs, by an intelligent machine or even by himself. He is liable to adjust rose-colored earphones when listening to his own voice, whether live or recorded. If the truth ever dawns upon him, he might go to the other extreme and hear nothing but his shortcomings.

A certain tenor I know is the possessor of an exceptionally beautiful voice, and has a fairly good vocal and musical education. I can see him as he listens to his own recording. He stands before the instrument, a transfixed smile on his face enraptured by his performance, by its natural virtues. All its faults are inaudible to him. Yet, he is well advanced and intelligent enough to spot the same faults on another tenor's recording. But his innate tenorities, his conceit, draws an iron curtain that no lie

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By LOUISE VARKONYI

detector can penetrate. To such a singer the tape recorder is but a vehicle for narcissism.

Another example, a fine mezzo-soprano, calls herself a contralto. She darkens, she thickens, she "covers" her voice, convinced that she owns the extremely rare colors of the lowest female range, whereby she merely ruins her instrument. One cannot play cello on a viola! Yet, listening to another "contralto" of her type this woman is the first to say: "She sounds artificial. That girl's voice has no dark, forceful qualities. Why does she sing Amneris?" Why, indeed? But will she ever ask the question of herself, confronted by her own recording? Let us hope that she will not live happily ever after in the grasp of this seemingly innocent but actually quite harmful white lie. Let us hope that the tape recorder, like an alarm, will wake her one fine morning to reality.

At yet another extreme, let us take the case of a certain unusually intelligent baritone. His voice is not remarkable, but he has a sound musical background and an overcritical mind. After having studied less than a year, he listens to his first recording. He is utterly disappointed, and declares angrily: "If I sound like this, I'll never sing a note again." He had the good fortune to hear the finest artists, in person and on excellent recordings, and measured himself up to *their* standards, ignoring the fact that half a lifetime of work lies behind their accomplishment. Still, there is more hope for the impatient baritone than there is for some of his sweet-voiced colleagues. He will sing again, of course, and sometimes he will bless and sometimes he will condemn the lie detector and its frank revelations.

Nevertheless, he will use the tape recorder faithfully in his search for a true vocal art. And the truth will open his mind, his ears, and his voice, and make him free of doubts.

"Singer, hear thyself", seems to be as difficult a proposition as the proverbial "Physician, heal thyself". To be able to do this, the singer has to become his own master, audience, critic, all in one. This, then, must have been the inherent meaning of Porpora's "Three Pages".

The art of mental self-audition, by which the inner hearing gauges and adjusts the voice to the outer ear, is truly a rare gift, and rarely developed.

Historically, the singer has heard himself only through bone-conduction and his inner resonances. Today there is no excuse. The tape recorder provides an excellent opportunity to listen, to detect, and to correct. It is therefore obligatory for the singer to rely on the inexhaustible instructions of this lie detector in all humility and with infinite patience.

Vocal phenomena such as a Farinelli, a Caruso, a Flagstad, appear only once or twice in a century. But are not lesser stars brilliant too? America perhaps has more talented and better-trained singers than any other country at present. To note their increasing number, their fine musicianship, their acting ability, their artistic accomplishment is an infinite pleasure to those watching their growth. Even more gratifying is the fact that these young stars appear at a time when American opera rises higher and higher on the world's music horizon. So why lament the passing of the old golden era? A new one is unmistakably on its way. Acting in the traditional pattern while pouring forth a magnificent voice, strutting on the stage while singing in the exaggerated declamatory style of the past, does not satisfy the demands of contemporary audiences. Today we must face the need for new concepts, new styles, new characterizations. And it is evident that the vocal art of America is ready to produce the next truly great singers.

The tape recorder certainly will help these aspiring artists on the way to perfection—that ever shimmering, ever receding light of the future.

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FROM THE EDITOR:

I DO not know of any charitable enterprise more worthy than the Musicians Foundation established in 1914 by that distinguished New York group somewhat incongruously known as The Bohemians. For forty-six years the late Arturo Toscanini was a member of The Bohemians, and their Musicians Foundation was the only such organization in America to which he ever lent his sponsorship (Casa Verdi, in Milan, was the only one elsewhere). It is only fitting, then, that Walter Toscanini should have donated to the Musicians Foundation a recently completed LP made up of excerpts from NBC Symphony rehearsals conducted by his celebrated father. The "*Zauberflöte*" Overture, Beethoven's Ninth, and "*La Traviata*" are the works so excitingly dissected on this remarkable documentary disc, which also includes an introduction and interpolated comments by Marcia Davenport. Collectors who want to own this very special release, which will never be available commercially, may combine their avidity with philanthropy by sending a contribution of \$25 or more to the Musicians Fund, Inc., c/o Clyde Burrows, its Secretary and Treasurer, at 131 Riverside Drive, New York 24, N. Y., and the record will go out to them by return mail. It is perhaps not irrelevant to add that all such moneys are fully tax-deductible. . . . I have been reading all the stories about "payola" with some amazement. No one ever has been bribed to "push" a classical record, I can assure you. . . . Get-well-quick wishes to Maynard Solomon, one of the nicest guys in the record business, who is recuperating from a dreadful highway accident. . . . Being in effect a "listener subscription" organization itself, the ARG is bound to extend felicitations to New York's WBAI-FM, now being operated by the non-profit Pacifica Foundation. Our own Gene Bruck is in charge at the "new" WBAI, just as our own Alan Rich is at Pacifica's home station, KPFA in Berkeley. . . . I hope that the New York City Opera production of "*The Cradle Will Rock*" engages the interest of some

A & R man. A recording of this work is very long overdue. . . . Mercury has signed pianist Byron Janis and violinist Joseph Szigeti. The latter may do the Bloch Concerto, his earlier performance of which has been out of the catalogue for years. . . . Speaking of Bloch, Leopold Stokowski has just completed for Vanguard what must be the recorded premiere of his *America*. . . . Moravians will be pleased to hear that Columbia is about to release performances of works by Antes Herbst, Peter, Michael, and Leinbach. . . . The Poulenc-Cocteau opera, "*La voix humaine*", is due shortly in RCA Victor's Soria series. . . . After all these years, Artur Schnabel finally has recorded the Chopin Ballades. He has also re-recorded the Scherzi. Both discs will be released by RCA Victor next month. . . . Congratulations to Hermon Scott, an ARG subscriber for twenty-five years and one of the authentic pioneers in the field of music reproduction, on his election to the board chairmanship of the Institute of High Fidelity Manufacturers. . . . I hear that some label (Columbia?) has recorded Howard (not his brother Dave) Brubeck's *Dialogues for Jazz Combo and Orchestra*. . . . Jazz buffs who are also Methodists will be interested in a disc entitled "Liturgical Jazz". For whatever reason this has not yet turned up here for review, but it has been announced by the Seminary Book Service in Alexandria, Va., which specializes in religious recordings. Well, this is a setting of Wesley's Order for Morning Prayer, albeit unorthodox. . . . Another offbeat item that may be of interest to some is the "Rain Record" offered by Wilshire House. "Use nature's soothing way to help you fall asleep", the press release says, avoiding the inevitability of being awakened by the raspy sound of the belly band, as I think the innermost groove is called. If I remember correctly, recordings of the drip-drip of a leaky faucet used to be ubiquitous for demonstration purposes at hi-fi shows. That was torture enough. Let us hope no one decides to record a thunderstorm. Beethoven's will do.

—J.L.

A report on the first dozen

4-track stereo tapes

IN THESE first twelve four-track tape releases, certain advantages as well as certain problems are immediately evident.

The advantages are, of course, obvious. Sonically, first, these tapes truly possess what we have come to think of as "tape sound": completely smooth and free of harshness even in the loudest of passages, well-separated in stereo effects, and very low in noise. Noise, incidentally, is the major stumbling block in any speed-reduction or track-width narrowing, for it is generally easy enough to build equalizing electronics to compensate for the resulting poorer frequency response, but not so easy to maintain adequate signal-to-noise ratios with these large amounts of equalization. Hum was never a problem on two-track tapes and appears to be just as nonexistent on these four-track releases. Hiss levels are ever so slightly higher here, but not enough to be troublesome. A steady background hiss, it appears to me, is not really a very disturbing or annoying type of interference to begin with. More later about another kind of noise-crosstalk.

Secondly, four-track tape has a very apparent economic advantage. There is no need to rehash any commentary on the cost per minute on two-track tape; these stiff prices are well known to those who were or wanted to be able to afford them. But tape, in its four-track form, still has a slight (in consistency of quality more than just quality) but decided advantage over disc, and it is still for the perfectionist. It is just cheaper to be a perfectionist now.

The only significant flaw in these tapes at present has to do with crosstalk—that is, the cross-feed of music from one "side" of the tape to the other. Most of the time this crosstalk is no problem at all. In fact, about 95 per cent of the time the crosstalk is so masked by the music on the "side"

being played that it can be considered nonexistent. For that other 5 per cent, however, where the music on the opposite side just happens to be loud and the music on the listened-to side is soft, chaos can and does result. True, that music on the other side comes out backwards, but it's there, strange-sounding or not. What can be done to eliminate this problem remains to be seen. Bear in mind, however, that this crosstalk is a problem for only a very small fraction, on the average, of the playing time of these tapes, and is really a small and probably soon-to-be removed bug in an otherwise superb new medium.—P.C.P.

▼
BARTÓK: *Concerto for Orchestra*; Bamberg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Heinrich Hollreiser. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Vox XTC-704, \$7.95.

THE HOLLREISER'S rather heavy-handed performance is reviewed twice on page 384 of the February, 1959, ARG. The tape sound is undeniably spectacular, close-in and sharply focused at the high end although slightly muddled in the lower registers. Directionality is very apparent, and crosstalk is barely noticeable. On my copy, the tape was wound on backwards, making a double rewinding necessary for playing in proper sequence. —P.C.P.

■
BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 3 in E flat ("Eroica")*; *Symphony No. 5 in C minor*; *Egmont Overture*; *Coriolan Overture*, Op. 62; Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra of London conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Vanguard VTF-1605, \$9.95.

THE BOULT'S performances, short in excitement but long in intelligence and warmth, are reviewed in the April and September, 1958 issues. The taping at hand is as stunningly natural and well-balanced as

the original two-track tape but, alas, the crosstalk so prevalent in these four-track tapes mars many passages. —P.C.P.

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 7 in E*; Symphony Orchestra of the Southwest German Radio, Baden-Baden, conducted by Hans Rosbaud. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Tandberg S-11, \$8.95.

T.J. D. reports on this fine performance quite comprehensively in the July, 1959, issue. Suffice it to add here that the four-track stereo taping is a sonic delight. While it is true, as is noted in the aforementioned review, that there is no overabundance of directionality, there is a marvelous richness, naturalness, and clarity to the sound. Crosstalk is faintly noticeable at times. —P.C.P.

COPLAND: *Billy The Kid (Ballet Suite); Statements for Orchestra*; London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Aaron Copland. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Everest STBR-3015, \$7.95.

BOTH the *Statements* and *Billy the Kid* are performed well. In his October, 1959, review of the corresponding disc release, A. K. finds fault with the latter, pointing out a lack of color and enthusiasm. To my mind, however, this is music with built-in color and enthusiasm. Copland's musical speech has a sinewy sparseness and a rhythmic angularity which, given mostly clear articulation such as we have here, is its own energy. Spectacular sound in every respect. Only crosstalk spoils the otherwise excellent engineering. Between gunshots in *Billy the Kid*, for instance, one can detect the far-off gurgling of *Statements* played backwards. —P.C.P.

DVOŘÁK: *Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 95 ("From the New World")*; Bamberg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Heinrich Hollreiser; *Symphony No. 4 in G, Op. 88*; Bamberg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jonel Perlea. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Vox XTF-709, \$9.95.

ALTHOUGH Perlea is more successful with the Fourth Symphony than is Hollreiser with the "New World", neither de-

parts from a generally wooden feeling. These works, both of which abound in lifeful grace, deserve a less stuffy outlook. Prior comment on these performances can be found on page 179 in December, 1957, page 326 in January, 1959, and page 36 in September, 1959. The sound, rather dry in the Fourth Symphony and slightly more distant in the Fifth, is generally excellent. The *Largo* of the "New World", however, is complete chaos because of crosstalk. This whole symphony is recorded at an apparently lower level than the Fourth, which makes the pianissimo passages of the *Largo* extra soft and thus easy prey for faint but decidedly annoying spillover from the other side of the tape. —P.C.P.

LISZT: *Piano Concerto No. 1 in E flat; Piano Concerto No. 2 in A*; Alfred Brendel (piano); Pro Musica Orchestra, Vienna, conducted by Michael Gielen. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Vox XTC-703, \$7.95.

BRENDL's playing here, while certainly quite sane, is less free-wheeling than it might be, especially in the A major Concerto. In short, these performances are just a shade too sensible to suit my fancy. See also page 151 in the December, 1957, issue. The sound is superb throughout this tape, though it appears that the dynamic range was compressed slightly in spots. Hiss level is acceptably low but, alas, crosstalk becomes most annoying in the *Adagio* of the E flat Concerto. —P.C.P.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Scherazade*; Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera (Volkoper) conducted by Mario Rossi; **LISZT:** *Four Hungarian Rhapsodies for*

(Continued on page 482)



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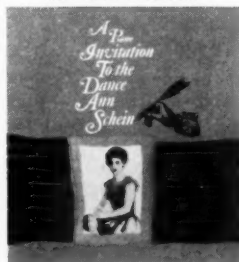
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Other Reviews

(including stereo®)

THERE IS IN SOULS a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.

—William Cowper

J. S. BACH: *Cantata No. 54: Widerstehe doch der Sünde; St. Matthew Passion: Erbarme dich, mein Gott* (No. 47); *Cantata No. 53: Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde; Cantata No. 200: Bekennen will ich seinen Namen; Helen Watts* (contralto); *Philomusica of London* directed by *Thurston Dart*, London/L'Oiseau-Lyre SOL-60003, \$5.98.

(Cantatas 53 & 54)
Roessel-Majdan, Scherchen...West. XWN-18392
(Cantatas 53 & 200)
Hennecke, Wenzinger.....Archive ARC-3104
(Cantata 54)

Deller, Leonhardt, Vanguard Bach Guild BG-550
®EVEN though the purely orchestral work in the only stereo recording of this music is a revelation in stylistic procedures, the over-all effect of this interesting collection is somewhat disappointing. This is due probably to three factors: first, the recording itself places the contralto too far in front of the chamber orchestra; secondly, the soloist, although far better than merely competent, does not have either the beauty of voice, dynamic variety (everything is sung loudly), or sufficient interpretative insight; and finally, the requisite spiritual quality never really projects as it does in other recordings of these same works. To best illustrate all three points, compare the present recording with the deeply moving and well-balanced versions of Cantata No. 54 and especially No. 53 by Hilde Roessel-Majdan, one of her most successful re-

corded performances. Thurston Dart's share in the proceedings, however, can be given nothing but the highest praise. In addition to his imaginative and expertly realized continuo on the harpsichord, he has achieved a remarkable clarity in the orchestral work. The string tone is beautiful, and Dart's attention to stylistic details is admirable. The quality of stereo, save for the above-mentioned imbalance, is very good. —I.K.

BARTÓK: *Concerto for Orchestra; Two Portraits for Orchestra, Op. 5; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra* conducted by *Rafael Kubelik*. Capitol-EMI Stereo SG-7186, \$5.98.

Reiner, Chicago.....RCA Victor LSC-1934

®THE comparatively short recorded history of the brilliant *Concerto For Orchestra* includes a number of appealing interpretations, but only four on the level of inspired understanding. Two are by Fritz Reiner, the first having been made with the Pittsburgh Symphony in the early days of LP. The other outstanding treatments (both available only monophonically) are led by Fricsay on Decca (DL-9951), and Ormandy on Columbia (ML-4973). Curiously, no recording exists by the man who commissioned the work and gave its première—Serge Koussevitzky. The Reiner accounts, which are extremely well played and quite dramatic, bring greater stress upon

the work's contrapuntal structure and diabolic overtones, while the Fricsay and Ormandy accounts have more full-blooded personalities with heavy emphasis upon ethnic and rhythmic elements. Kubelik's statement is certainly carefully planned and colorfully executed. His grasp of the meaning is far from superficial, but the stylistic attributes to be found in the other delineations are not so cleverly drawn. The present album contains an excellent dividend in the form of the early, lesser-known *Portraits*, strongly reminiscent of the same Wagnerian influence to be found in the writing of the young Schönberg. Kubelik conducts them exceedingly well. Capitol-EMI's reproduction is faultless. —A.K.

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Concerto No. 1 in C, Op. 15; Piano Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13 ("Pathétique");* Wilhelm Backhaus (piano) with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt. London Stereo CS-6099, \$4.98.

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37;* Wilhelm Backhaus (piano) with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt. London Stereo CS-6094, \$4.98.

⑧BACKHAUS has truly reached the golden age that most artists dream about but few attain. He has the rich maturity of concept that comes only with age (76 in March), yet his playing retains the virility, fluency, and complete control of youth. With Schmidt-Isserstedt as a remarkably sensitive collaborator, both concerti are rendered with rare poetic insight and profound depth, notwithstanding the more measured momentum of the final movement of the later one. I do, however, take exception to the overblown cadenza (by Carl Reinecke) utilized in the opening movement of the C minor Concerto. But this lapse from lofty grandeur is only momentary and easily overlooked. Backhaus' response to the *Pathétique* is one of intense drama and heartfelt poignance. Very few interpretations of this composition have been so moving. Both albums are superbly recorded. —A.K.

BEETHOVEN: *Septet in E Flat, Op. 20;* Vienna Octet Members. London Stereo CS-6132, \$4.98.

Berlin Phil. Ensemble.....Decca DL-9934
⑧THE first stereo recording of this Septet seems to be the same performance as that on London mono LL-1191. It is now made even more attractive through clearer separation of instrumental colors. In terms of smoothness of ensemble, this version is unbeatable; but the Berliners, aided by exceptionally clean mono sound, play this work with an added dash of jauntiness and vigor, although their first violinist produces some rather unbeautiful slides and occasional slips from pitch. —H.G.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67; Consecration of the House Overture, Op. 124;* Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Lorin Maazel. Decca DL-10,006, \$4.98.

(Symphony)
Walter, Col. Sym.....Columbia ML-5365
Toscanini, NBC.....RCA Victor LM-1757
(Overture)
Klemperer, Phil. Orch.....Angel 35529
Toscanini, NBC.....RCA Victor LM-9022

▲VIRILITY and a flair for the dramatic are the most positive features of Maazel's direction. This is vibrant, youthful Beethoven, sonorous and propulsive. But youth also has its drawbacks, most apparent in such places as bars 22-23 of the first movement of the Symphony, where Maazel momentarily loses control of the orchestra; at bars 342-345 of the same movement, when an ill-advised ritard is taken; and each time the opening of the first theme of the final movement recurs, when an exaggerated *allargando* is inserted. There is a heavy reliance on the brass instruments throughout. That this choir of the orchestra often reproduces so as to obliterate all else (especially in the final movement of the Symphony at bars 50-56, 91-94, 132-140, and 255-261) is more an engineering ill than a musical one. Further technical problems are to be noted after bar 240 of the second movement, from which point to the end the volume on my review copy steadily decreased. The reproduction itself is on the wide, resonant side—too much so, in fact, for the gentler passages. —A.K.

Beethoven songs—a rich, at times overwhelmingly powerful experience

By HERBERT GLASS

THIS MOST bountiful selection from Beethoven's song output to be made available in this country has been on the English market for at least five years. HMV's American licensees seemingly never found it of sufficient interest for local consumption. There have been Beethoven recitals on LP before, the most satisfactory by Alfred Poell and Viktor Graef on Westminster XWN-18706; now we are given a much larger chunk of this seldom-heard music.

It has long been the fashion to dismiss this sector of the composer's corpus as an intriguing failure; which means that a few are against it and even fewer have heard it beyond *An die ferne Geliebte* (not included

here, but recorded by Dieskau & Moore on HMV ALP-1066), *Adelaide*, *Wonne der Wehmut*, and three or four more. Musicologists, encyclopedists and teachers have taken great pains to display the Lieder to their audiences as proofs of the super-genius' fallibility and therefore sub-deity status. A perfect example of this is Grove's incredibly shallow condemnation of the works in a few hundred words which concentrate on the flaws of the early songs (and seldom even the best of these) while utterly missing the point of the later creations.

Those listeners entering this byway of music for the first time, for reasons other than to confirm their belief that even the greatest sometimes slip from a certain standard, will find it a rich, at times overwhelmingly powerful experience. The selection naturally includes trivia as well as greatness. The former is much less in evidence. The two settings of Metastasio's *L'amante Impaziente* are not worth discussing; the comparatively familiar *In questa tomba oscura* is little more than a well-digested exercise handed down from Maestro Salieri. *Marmotte*, the *Faust* song, the Op. 83 *Sehnsucht*, *Der Zufriedene*, and *Die Liebe* have at least minimal attractions, but are hardly original enough to convert the skeptic or fascinate the neophyte.

With the Gellert poems of 1803 a great change has taken place. There is a deepening of reaction to the text and the music is now clearly touched with Beethoven's personal agony. There is less interest in the strophe and in the somewhat off-hand (if not second-hand) manner of that which came before. The Italian aria, as a formal element, is de-emphasized. In the Gellerts, the words of religious feeling

BEETHOVEN: *Lieder, Vol. I: Goethe Songs—Mailed; Marmotte; Neue Liebe, neues Leben; Aus "Faust" (Song of the Flea); Wonne der Wehmut; Sehnsucht (Op. 83, No. 2); Mit einem gemalten Bande. Miscellaneous Songs—In questa tomba oscura; Zärtliche Liebe (Ich liebe dich); Andenken; An die Hoffnung (Op. 94); Der Kuss; Adelaide. Vol. II: Six Poems by Gellert—Bitten; Die Liebe des Nächsten; Vom Tode; Die Ehre Gottes aus der Natur; Gottes Macht und Vorsehung; Busslied. Miscellaneous Songs—Der Wachelschlag; Der Zufriedene; Die Liebe; Das Liedchen von der Ruhe; Lied aus der Ferne; Abendlied unter'm gestirnten Himmel; L'amante impaziente (2 settings); Resignation; Die Sehnsucht (Grove's Op. 246). Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Herta Klust (piano). His Master's Voice set ALP-1317/8, two discs (import), \$4.98 each. Distributed in the U.S.A. by Lambert & Mycroft, Haverford, Pa.*

are treated seriously and the results are moving without quite reaching the heights one would expect of this composer. However Tiedge's monolithically turgid *An die Hoffnung*, heard here in its second and far superior setting, is art of the most sublime inspiration. The "hope" theme is an ideal one for Beethoven here as it was in the arias of Leonora and Florestan in "*Fidelio*" of a decade earlier. This is a Lied prophetic of the much later Hugo Wolf in its precise musical mirroring of words. It is declamatory, without a perfectly unified melodic flow and as such not in keeping with the general conception of Lied. The piano adds to a mood rather than having a solo capacity. Beethoven has wrought the miracle of dignifying a second-rate poem by imposing his own interpretation on it almost to the point of making it as masterful as the music itself. The passage "*lass durch dich empor gehoben*" is, by the way, even melodically and constructionally prophetic of Wolf. *Abendlied* is another important creation—a lovely, touching mood piece, superficially on the order of Mozart's *Abendempfindung*, but pervaded by its creator's infinite loneliness. The gentler side of Beethoven's nature is magnificently displayed in the tender *Zärtliche Liebe*, *Andenken* and *Der Kuss*. The heady passion of *Neue Liebe* and *Lied aus der Ferne* also have their great effect. The familiar and traditional *Adelaide* is so beautifully sung by Fischer-Dieskau that it seems beyond all criticism.

Taken as a body, this is not easy music to listen to—particularly for the first time. When at its best, as in *An die Hoffnung*, it can seem as bewildering as the initial hearing of Wolf *Michelangelo Lieder* or *Grenzen der Menschheit*. We do not often hear the kind of long, graceful melody to be found in the most popular songs of Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, or Strauss. Often the music seems ill-suited to its formal framework, waiting to burst forth. The same is true of the Op. 111 Piano Sonata; in neither case is it a factor which should dim one's ultimate appreciation. It does, of course, make for difficulty of comprehension in both instances.

The performances are generally excellent. Fischer-Dieskau sings with deep

understanding and technical control. Humor is not one of his strong points (possibly not Beethoven's either) and in certain songs where this is required, the singer is not at home. On the whole this most prominent of today's recitalists shows how wonderfully the form can be served by a voice not genuinely equipped for the severest demands of its repertory, and of little sensual appeal. He is at his best in the middle register to *mf* and truly beautiful on high (almost falsetto), soft passages; but unlike his recording of *Die Winterreise*, this set does not find him pushing his top and bottom to the point of either bawling or quavery hoarseness. He meets the requisites of *An die Hoffnung* brilliantly; this is thinking and understanding as well as singing. At the big dramatic moments we hear none of the operatic incongruities which are the stock-in-trade of the less gifted recitalist. In a very few of the songs, e. g. *Marmotte*, an old Dieskau miscalculation is displayed—forcing dramatic variation into a phrase which must be identically repeated. Here it comes at "*avecque si, avecque la*" (*sf* on *si* and *la*); he changes the strength of the *sforzandi* on the first repetition with a resultant overemphasis and, for that moment, loss of control. I think that he is a little dissatisfied with the song and is preventing the phrase from palling on himself through repetition-with-change. But the song is a trifle and the results matter little.

I have never heard the exhausting Gellerts to better advantage than here. The singer does not attempt to exaggerate their import, thereby granting them a stature as important steps toward the best of the later songs. With these texts he is as commanding as in his recorded Bach and Buxtehude, evidencing an obvious affinity to the religious in his art. The pianist is always good, without providing the strong partnership possible from a Gerald Moore; it is to her credit that she is particularly strong in the best of the songs.

These records are a must for every student of Beethoven, the Lied, or simply of vital and engrossing music. If there should be any desire to find glaring weakness in Beethoven's music, yuk it up with *Wellington's Victory*.

BIZET: "*Carmen*"—*Habanera*; Germaine Cernay (mezzo-soprano); *Duo, Michaëla-José*; Jane Rolland (soprano); Charles Friant (tenor); *Séguidille*; Ninon Vallin (soprano); *Chanson Bohème*; Conchita Supervia (mezzo-soprano); *Couplets du Toréador*; Endrèze (baritone); *Duo, Je vais danser en votre honneur*; *Air de la Fleur*; Cernay, Friant; *Air des Cartes*; Supervia; *Air de Michaëla*; Solange Delmas (soprano); *Duo Final*; Vallin, Friant. Odéon ORX-106, \$4.98.

▲ THIS miscellaneous collection of "*Carmen*" scenes is a good example of how well it is possible to make such older recordings sound on LP. There is a sense of space in most of them, and the voices come

through with admirable clarity. It is admitted in the program notes that Germaine Cernay was temperamentally no *Carmen*; she did have the right quality of voice, but she never sang the role in the opera house. As might be expected, her *Habanera* is vocally rich and pleasing, but uneventful. Vallin, it seems, was an admired *Carmen* (having graduated from the role of Michaela), but she too seems rather placid in the *Séguidille*. She gives more in the finale. There was no lack of temperament in Supervia, however; she plays up the *Gypsy Song* and the *Card Scene* with all the Spanish that was in her. Rolland is quite charming in the first act duet, but Friant, here and throughout the

The last Gieseeking records: a treasure

GIESEKING just prior to his death was in the process of recording the complete sonatas of Beethoven. With this final two-record album, entitled "The Gieseeking Heritage", the pianist achieved a total of twenty-three out of thirty-two, not including several previous LP versions of the *Pathétique*, *Moonlight*, and *Appassionata* sonatas which were made for both Columbia and Angel. The present interpretations are truly remarkable on an individual basis for their marvelous range of color, superb insight, and wonderful sense of style. Collectors may at times prefer other pianists' performances of specific sonatas, but the greatness of Gieseeking's total achievement cannot be refuted. At the time he died Gieseeking had only recorded the first three movements of the Op. 28. The finale, tragically,

was never to be heard, for the pianist succumbed on October 26, 1956, only three days after this particular session. There is no trace of illness in this playing, only the most admirable control and sensitivity; this is a remarkable interpretation highlighted through its subtle phrasing. The other early sonatas are no less beautifully realized, and the listener will be especially intrigued by the dynamic *Pathétique*, played here as though in a white heat. There are a few missed notes and some less than perfectly executed finger passages which undoubtedly would have been remade had time permitted; these faults are, however, of the most minor consequence in view of the over-all splendor of the performance. It is a tightly knit reading which recalls the spirit and drive of a Toscanini reading of a Beethoven symphony. The two little middle-period sonatas of Op. 49 are a model of simplicity and restrained elegance. In sum, this well-recorded album is a treasure, and highly recommended. —I.K.

The late Walter Gieseeking (1895-1956)



BEETHOVEN: *Piano Sonatas Nos. 1 in F minor, Op. 2, No. 1; 8 in C minor ("Pathétique"), Op. 13; 12 in A flat, Op. 26; 15 in D ("Pastoral"), Op. 28 (incomplete recording); 19 in G minor, Op. 49, No. 1; & 20 in G, Op. 49, No. 2; Walter Gieseeking (piano). Angel set 3600-BL, four sides, \$10.98.*

program, seems to me a bit stiff. He does, nevertheless, surprise by singing the climax of the *Flower Song* as directed by Bizet, softly. I found Delmas' voice somewhat shrill, despite the encomiums in the notes, but she was obviously a seasoned artist. Endr ze gives one of the smoothest *Toreador Songs* I have ever heard—a truly distinguished piece of singing. —P.L.M.

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BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68*; Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam conducted by Eduard Van Beinum. Epic LC-3603, \$4.98.

The Same; Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML-5385, \$4.98.

Toscanini, NBC.....RCA Victor LM-1702
▲THERE is one thing about both treatments that becomes increasingly apparent and encouraging as one listens. Each interpretation has a definite character of its own and cannot be said to be imitative of any of the strong Brahms symphonic stylists of our day (Toscanini, Furtw ngler, Walter). With Ormandy in particular this beautifully recorded performance represents a considerable emancipation, for his Firsts formerly followed a familiar pattern of inner tautness, considerable animation, and insistent dynamics. The results, while grounded on solid musicianship, lacked the nobility and authentic drama of Toscanini's; the latter's special ability and insights into this type of projection allowed him to carry it off with full conviction. Ormandy's totally new approach now places prime emphasis upon structural aspects and tonal sonority. Played at more sustained tempi with more relaxed phrasings throughout, the intricate counterpoint and inner voices of instrumentation are fascinatingly brought into almost microscopic view like the exposed workings of a complex time mechanism. The broader quality also allows this great ensemble to sing out in unequalled richness and sonority. Not all will like Ormandy's new performance, for it lacks the sweeping drama (particularly in the fourth movement) and intensity that we have become accustomed to, but those who listen for

sheer sound and uncommon structural definition will not be disappointed. The late Van Beinum's method was also increasingly his own—certainly this recording is more worthy of his memory than its predecessor. By and large it is midway in mood between the present Ormandy reading and Toscanini's, striking a fine compromise between lyricism and drama. At times (first movement: bars 159-190, 430-475; second movement: bars 32-38, etc.) inserted accelerandi lend a tighter, more immediate quality to various thematic episodes. In the final coda all stops are pulled out, and the pace moves along in high gear to a striking finish. The Concertgebouw, though not on a level with the Philadelphia Orchestra, boasts considerable beauty of tone and precision of ensemble. Epic's reproduction is panoramic, but a bit thick-sounding and not too well balanced. The horn solos in the last movement emerge distantly and lacking in sonority. —A.K.

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BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 3 in F, Op. 90; Variations on a Theme of Haydn; Op. 56a*; Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Erich Leinsdorf. Capitol Stereo SP-8483, \$5.98.

(Symphony)
Klemperer.....Angel S-35481
Reiner.....Victor LSC-2209

⑤THE performance is strong and warm. But on my copy the strings sound as if they were a few city blocks away, while the brass are vital and close. This, of course, spells disaster right in the opening measures of the symphony. Too bad. Leinsdorf rarely identifies himself with music as effectively as he does here, so the tragedy is intensified. Happily, the engineering is far superior in the variations, and Leinsdorf delivers a sensitively phrased and well-unified account.

—D.H.M.

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BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98*; Royal Danish Orchestra conducted by John Frandsen. Forum F-70002, \$1.98.

▲THIS is a warm, often vital, and highly satisfying account in the classic tradition, and it deserves far better than the sub-primitive reproduction accorded it.—A.K.

BRAHMS: *Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a*; **WAGNER:** *A Siegfried Idyll; Träume* (arranged for violin solo; Hugh Bean, violinist); Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Paul Kletzki. Angel Stereo S-35765, \$5.98.

(*Siegfried Idyll*) Steinberg, PittsburghCapitol SP-8368

ⓈTHERE is as yet no better reading of the Brahms-Haydn Variations on stereo, but Kletzki's performance is of modest dynamic dimensions and falls short of the grandeur of the Toscanini, Walter, and Klemperer versions. Surprisingly, a number of instances of raggedness of ensemble are to be heard in the playing of the

usually excellent Philharmonia. With two minor reservations, the *Siegfried Idyll* is an account of gratifying depth and lineal beauty. My first reservation concerns one of the key moments of the entire score—bars 243-259, where the Siegfried theme, modulating into F major, is repeated for the last time, this time more broadly, and with a jubilation that I think Kletzki partly misses. The other quibble is with the conductor's strange habit of building the melodic (and dynamic) line to the climactic point (bar 286, etc.) and then suddenly subduing it in favor of a secondary voice at the moment where the greatest emphasis is needed. The exposi-

Only now, a really first-rate 'Alto Rhapsody'

BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98*; *Rhapsody for Contralto, Male Chorus and Orchestra, Op. 53*; Aafe Heynis (contralto); Royal Male Chorus "Apollo"; Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, conducted by Eduard Van Beinum. Epic LC-3563, \$4.98.

▲IT is not a new idea, nor a personal discovery of mine, that Brahms is a composer only too often victimized by his interpreters. The *Alto Rhapsody* is a veritable contralto paradise, yet only now for the first time are we offered a really first-rate recording of it. If we return to the first attempt, made in 1930 by Sigrid Onegin with Kurt Singer conducting, (recently reissued on LP by Electrola in Germany), we find the singing tonally gorgeous but superficial, the eminent soloist more concerned with the placing of tones and with demonstrating her remarkable portamento than with the Goethe text. More recently Marian Anderson tried three times without producing a satisfactory recording. A composite of her three performances—with Ormandy, Monteux, and Reiner successively at the podium—might give us the singer's best, for neither the good spots nor the weak are consistent. The no-longer-available recording of Elisabeth Höngen and Ferdinand Leitner was marred by unsteady tone. Kathleen Ferrier and Clemens Krauss, had they

lived for another go at the work, might have turned the trick; the performance they left us only misses by seeming too slow and careful, perhaps tentative. Monica Sinclair and Sir Adrian Boult gave us a good account of the music without, however, the conviction that they were discoursing of really big things. Miss Heynis, whose work is new to me, uses her rich and beautifully controlled voice for the glory of the music. In the recording she is not allowed to swamp the orchestra with tone, but is made a part of Van Beinum's rich but restrained ensemble. This allows for a telling climax just before the end.

Which accounts for the final quarter of the disc. Happily, superlatives applied to *Rhapsody* go for the Symphony as well. Van Beinum had the secret, shared by woefully few conductors, of keeping the Brahms orchestral texture light and beautifully in balance. I find his tempi absolutely convincing; the music flows serenely in the first and second movements. The third has in it something of that Olympian laughter one associates with Beethoven; the finale is broad and powerful. The Fourth is cast in an heroic mold; so Van Beinum presents it. One notes with sadness that in the untimely passing of this fine conductor Brahms has lost one of his strongest champions.

—P.L.M.

tion is nevertheless one of high merit. The same cannot be said of *Träume*, which is better left to the vocalist and in the register in which it was written (rather than an octave up as played here). The engineering is first-rate throughout —A.K.

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CARLEBACH: *Esso Einai; Hanshomoh Loch; Mimkomcho; Uv'neh o'soh; Shomer Yisroel; Al Tiroh; Av Horachamim; Luley; Es-Haleich; Ki Lishouos'cho; Rauch; Od Yeshmoa; Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach*, with choir and orchestra conducted by Milton Okun. Zimra Z-201, \$4.98.

▲THESE are the singer's own settings of Biblical words; he is assisted in performance by a choral group and several instruments here designated an orchestra. "His songs", the jacket notes tell us, "are an unusual expression of feeling reflecting varying as well as blended moods of Jewish religious life. The deep but yet beautifully simple joy of the Chassidic mystic moods in combination with the overwhelming love for the study of the Torah as lived in the world of the Yeshivot, permeate all of his music. Sparkling once in a while through this fusion of moods is a touch of Yemenite influence such as in the song 'Esso Einai.' " To the non-Jewish listener the Rabbi's singing is not unreminiscent of the older school of synagogue chanting as we know it in recordings of Rosenblatt, Sirota and the rest, yet the style is something very different. The singing is more in the manner of the folk singers of our own land. The assisting chorus might be any group of enthusiastic bystanders. To all those who understand I am sure these songs must be deeply moving. —P.L.M.

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CHOPIN: *Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor, Op. 21; Polonaise-Fantasia in A flat, Op. 61; Alexander Uninsky* (piano), with The Hague Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Willem van Otterloo (in the Concerto). Epic LC-3610, \$4.98.

(Concerto No. 2)
Ashkenazy, Gerzynski, Warsaw Phil...Angel 35403
Rubinstein, Wallenstein...RCA Victor LM-2265
(Polonaise-Fantasia)
Rubinstein...RCA Victor LM-6109

▲UNINSKY is a conscientious and at

times even an earnest performer, but his playing lacks the inherent color, drama, and elegance of contour that make an Ashkenazy or Rubinstein interpretation so unique and exciting. The ensemble work in the Concerto is not notable for its neatness nor its tonal accuracy. The reproduction is downright poor in all respects. —A.K.

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CHOPIN: *24 Preludes, Op. 28; Ryszard Bakst* (piano). Westminster XWN-18881, \$4.98.

CHOPIN: *51 Mazurkas—Op. 6, Nos. 1-4; Op. 7, Nos. 1-5; Op. 17, Nos. 1-4; Op. 24, Nos. 1-4; Op. 30, Nos. 1-4; Op. 33, Nos. 1-4, Op. 41, Nos. 1-4; Op. 50, Nos. 1-3; A minor (à Emile Gaillard); A minor (Notre Temps, No. 2); Op. 67 Nos. 1-4; & Op. 68, Nos. 1-4; Ryszard Bakst* (piano). Westminster set XWN-3313, six sides, \$15.94.

(Preludes)
Arrau...Columbia ML-4420
Novaes...Vox 10940
(Mazurkas)
Rubinstein...RCA Victor LM-2049
Reisenberg...Westminster XWN 18830/32

▲WINNER of the sixth prize in the 1949 International Chopin Competition in Warsaw, Ryszard Bakst is one of three Polish pianists whom Westminster has chosen to commence their intended complete recording of that master's works. Thus far this artist, who recently made his American debut, has to his credit recordings of the Op. 28 Preludes and fifty-one of the Mazurkas, a fairly large accomplishment and one, regrettably, which is not especially successful. Bakst is a sensitive performer with a nice touch and a serviceable although not brilliant technique; his one great attribute, an introverted approach which is a distinct contrast from most of today's overly dynamic Chopin interpreters, is at the same time a detraction, for much of his playing stays below a certain level of loudness and is dynamically uninteresting. This is particularly true of the Preludes, which in addition to great sensitivity do demand a brilliant approach: too much of this interpretation is simply dull and devoid of color. The Mazurkas fare somewhat better, especially in the middle- and last-period works; here Bakst suddenly seems



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When critics review a performance of contralto Maureen Forrester, they lean heavily on the word "perfection"—for good reason, as her approach to the songs in this album demonstrates. Equally impressive are the remarkable sound and the flawless interpretations by Charles Munch and the Boston Symphony.

Rarely has a song recital caused such excitement as Cesare Valletti's Town Hall concert of October, 1959. In addition to his triumphs in opera, tenor Valletti excels in the lieder art. The recital featured examples of both forms, and RCA Victor engineers were on hand to capture its most thrilling moments.



Josephine Baker's French stage debut in 1925 rocked Paris. It was Miss Baker who introduced jazz to Europeans and magnetized continental audiences with her Harlem blues style. Latest evidence of her timeless popularity is "Paris Mes Amours," her 1959 French success. Hits from that revue highlight this Baker bouquet.

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to realize that these *are* among Chopin's finest compositions, and he does reasonably well with them. The pianist's Polish background is, of course, heard to best advantage in the Mazurkas, and his interpretation will be of interest to Chopin collectors even though he cannot hope to compare with the dynamically varied, colorful, and brilliant performances of Rubinstein, whose recording of these same fifty-one Mazurkas must still be considered superior to all others. Interestingly enough, Bakst's set occupies six sides as opposed to Rubinstein's five (side six of the latter is devoted to the *Fantaisie Polonaise* and the *Andante Spinato and Grand Polonaise*), but each is on a separate band, a decided advantage which the Victor set does not have. The fifty-seven Mazurkas (there are altogether sixty-two, including alternating versions of the same pieces, as given in the Paderewski edition) in Nadia Reisenberg's performances, a very capable interpretation, also take up five sides (side six here contains the *Barcarolle*, *Berceuse*, and *Allegro de Concert*), and Westminster has banded each separate piece. Economically, then, the new Bakst set is not overly attractive.

Commendable as the idea may be to have Polish artists and prize-winners of the International Chopin Competition of Warsaw record a complete edition, the selection of Bakst, on the basis of the present discs, seems to me to have been unworthy of the project. The imported Pathé set (DTX-171/5) of the first six prize-winners in the 1955 Chopin Competition certainly features playing of a much higher caliber than can be heard here. —I.K.

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CHOPIN: *Sonata No. 3 in B minor, Op. 58; Barcarolle, Op. 60; Waltz No. 2 in A flat, Op. 34, No. 1; Waltz No. 6 in D flat, Op. 64, No. 1; Mazurka No. 35 in C minor, Op. 56, No. 3; Mazurka No. 36 in A minor, Op. 59, No. 1; Vladimir Ashkenazy (piano). Angel Stereo S-35648, \$5.98.*

⑧THE Sonata and Barcarolle are delightfully performed, with glistening virtuosity and commanding dynamic decla-

mation, and with Ashkenazy's customary elegance of phrasing and expressivity. Neither the Waltzes nor the Mazurkas are so impressive, however, the former being delivered in scaled-down, articulatively detached, and frenetically inflected fashion, while the latter tend to be too inflexibly phrased for ideal realization. No fault can be found with Angel's reproduction. —A.K.

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CHOPIN: *14 Waltzes; Barbara Hesse-Bukowska (piano); Westminster Stereo WST-14071, \$5.98.*

CHOPIN: *Sonatas, Nos. 2 in B flat minor and No. 3 in B minor; Wladyslaw Kedra (piano); Westminster Stereo WST-14072, \$5.98.*

⑧THESE are the first two releases in a series planned by Westminster to present all of Chopin's compositions for piano. The performers are various Polish prize winners of the Chopin International Competition. The work of the first two artists represented has a good deal of appeal, part of which is the revelation of the way today's Polish pianists are approaching the work of their greatest composer and how they use the piano to attain their ends. Based on the two examples at hand, one immediately senses an orientation to the music and the instrument different from the one that is prevalent in the work of the younger generation of American pianists. A common meeting ground is the insistence on the articulation of every note at all cost—a universal goal among young pianists, it would appear. But where American pianists develop a technique for speed and dynamic contrast, the Poles (if Miss Hesse-Bukowska and Mr. Kedra and a dozen or so others I have heard are representative) seem more concerned with good tone and musical neatness. Both groups have definite identities, but individual members of the groups are more apt to be remembered by their group affiliation than by their own musical personalities. Miss Hesse-Bukowska's account of the Chopin waltzes is very pleasant. She makes an ingratiating sound; and though her rhythm is employed in the manner that has become traditional for performing

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Chopin in our century, it is tasteful. She shows strain when she attempts to play fast and loud, and the most brilliant waltzes are thereby robbed of some of their glitter. Over-all, she makes a good impression; her musicianship is certainly a cut above the average. Westminster's recording here is quite fine, and the surfaces are pleasing. Equally excellent is the sound of the disc which contains the two sonatas, but the aggressive faces here are a deterrent to one's enjoyment of Kedra's musical interpretations of these poetic masterworks. —C.J.L.

FRANCK: *Quintet in F minor for Piano and Strings*; Sviatoslav Richter (piano); Quartet of the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra (Isaac Zhuk & Boris Veltman, violins; Maurice Gurvich, viola; Isaac Buravsky, cello). Monitor MC-2036, \$4.98.

Sokoloff, Curtis Quartet... Westminster XWN-18577
▲ALTOGETHER, this is a thoroughly exciting performance which achieves its distinction, as one might surmise, from the presence of Sviatoslav Richter. The pianist, one hears immediately, fits into chamber music with the greatest of ease: Richter, of course, gives the quintet its foundation, yet this is not self-centered virtuosity—altogether, this is an integrated, well-shaped, and idiomatic interpretation in which every performer has an equal say. Indeed, except for a first violinist, whose wide tremolo becomes somewhat annoying (interestingly enough, it is evident only in the first movement), this is playing of the very highest caliber, which reaches its apex in the marvelous slow movement. A previous recording by the Curtis Quartet and Vladimir Sokoloff was very well done and perhaps more French in style than the present reading. The difference between the two interpretations is mainly a matter of less reserve and more emotion on the part of the Russian players, and it cannot be denied that the latter version is also the more exciting. The recording is somewhat resonant and a trifle muddy but nevertheless acceptable in view of the virtues of the performance. Recommended.

—I.K.

Delightful Handel, beautifully sung . . .

HANDEL: "*Alcina*"—*Tornami a vagheggiar; Ombre pallide; "Esther"*—*Tune your harps; Turn not, O Queen; "Jephtha"*—Act III Sinfonia; Act II Symphony; *Rodrigo*"—*Suite*; Joan Sutherland (soprano), William Herbert (tenor), Hervey Alan (bass), Philomusica of London conducted by Anthony Lewis. London/L'Oiseau-Lyre Stereo L-60001, \$5.98.

⑤ HERE is a record to whet the appetite and to some extent satisfy it at the same time. At least the first three of the four major works from which these selections are taken ought to be recorded in entirety but have not been, at least yet. So these tidbits show us some of what, thanks to the lethargy or crass commercialism of the record companies, we are missing. But these pieces are also delights in themselves. The first side is devoted to vocal selections, and they are beautifully sung. Joan Sutherland is a splendid soprano who is attracting a great deal of attention lately, and her talents will be amply discussed by my colleagues [see below] in connection with other releases more fully devoted to her. Suffice it to say here that she has a lovely voice and uses it with great artistry. William Herbert's one solo here offers some of the finest singing I have ever heard from him. Hervey Alan, a less familiar performer, is none the less a fine singer, too, and he

acquits himself in keeping with the level of his associates. The music on the second side is purely orchestral. The Act III Sinfonia of "*Jephtha*" is one of the seemingly inexhaustible number of examples of Handel's borrowing from himself. For this music is an arrangement, as the excellent jacket notes point out, of the final *Allegro* of his own Sonata in D for Violin and Figured Bass, the No. 13 of Op. 1. Those who are able will find it very interesting to compare the two versions. The "*Suite*" from the opera "*Rodrigo*" is in reality merely the Overture and the string of dances which, in conformity with the frequent practice of the time, follow it. Regardless of nomenclature, it is all very delightful music. Lewis and his instrumentalists perform with consummate skill and impeccable taste. The stereo sound is very good: the separation is tangible, though not so extreme as in most recordings one is apt to encounter these days, but the quality of sound is very high, with clarity and richness happily blended. Texts and translations are included in the notes. The dual blessing of the entry of the Oiseau-Lyre label into stereo and the renewed (if limited) availability of this label's releases is amply illustrated by this admirable disc, which is hereby cordially recommended alike to the Handel buff and the casual listener.

—J.W.B.

. . . and more from Joan Sutherland

Operatic Recital: "*Lucia di Lammermoor*"—*Regnava nel silenzio* (Donizetti); "*Ernani*"—*Ernani, involami; "Vespri Siciliani"*—*Bolero; Mercè, diletti amiche* (Verdi); "*Linda di Chamounix*"—*O luce di quest'anima; "Lucia di Lammermoor"*—*Il dolce suono* (Donizetti); Joan Sutherland (soprano); Nadine

Sautereau (soprano); Paris Conservatoire Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Nello Santi. London Stereo OS-25111, \$5.98.

⑤ THIS coloratura sensation of London is a native of New South Wales. She has been singing at Covent Garden since 1952, and it is probably a good thing for

her that success did not come too easily or too quickly. At first she essayed somewhat heavier parts, such as Agathe in "Der Freischütz" and Amelia in "Un Ballo in Maschera", and this may have given her an insight into the dramatic meanings of opera which is certainly unusual in a *soprano leggera*. Could it be, also, that the intellectual approach of a Callas might have given the young artist something to think about? Her great moment came in February, 1959 when, says Harold Rosenthal, "she scored the greatest triumph of any British-born singer at Covent Garden, probably since the days of Melba, in "Lucia di Lammermoor". . ."

The comparison with Callas is inevitable. If on the one hand Sutherland does not stress and underline the text so strongly as does Callas, her voice is certainly more properly the type traditionally associated with Lucia. It is a consistently beautiful voice, and it has personality; therefore it will not arouse controversy as the Callas voice has done. She gives us the first part of the second scene of act

1, complete with the harp prelude, ending with the entrance of Edgardo. Nadine Sautereau fills in as an unusually pleasing Alicia. Both parts of the *Mad Scene* complete this portrait of Lucia. The opera, which apparently has been less of a repertory staple in England than in this country, has taken on a new lease of life. Let us hope for a chance to share the sensation, for here is a singer who can make this florid music both ear-filling and exciting.

One wishes, too, that the recent recording of "Linda di Chamounix" might have had the benefit of such a singer in the title role. Sutherland tosses off the bird-like *O luce di quest' anima* with the greatest of unconcern, making the most of the slender sentiment that is in it. *Ernani*, *involami* for once becomes meaningful, with just enough emphasis on the text. Only too often this aria degenerates into a banal, inconsequential waltz. And the *Bolero* from the "Sicilian Vespers" is sung lightly and happily. The recorded sound is excellent. —P.L.M.

RICHARD STRAUSS 1864-1949

September of this year marked the tenth anniversary of this great composer. During the past few months a number of works, operas, songs, choral works, etc. have been made available. Some of these have long been out of print; others are made available in this country for the first time. An asterisk before the titles below indicates these newly issued works.

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BOOSEY and HAWKES

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HANDEL: *Te Deum and Jubilate for the Peace of Utrecht; Coronation Anthem No. 1, "Zadok the Priest";* Ilse Wolf (soprano), Helen Watts (alto), Wilfred Brown and Edgar Fleet (tenors), Thomas Hemsley (bass), Geraint Jones Singers and Orchestra conducted by Geraint Jones. Decca Archive ARC-3133, \$5.98 or stereo ARC-73133, \$6.98.

⑧THE *Utrecht Te Deum* appeared in a previous recording (together with the fourth of the 1727 Coronation Anthems, "Let thy right hand be strengthened") on Haydn Society HSL-2046, a release long out of print. This featured a group of Danish performers who labored carefully and earnestly under the painstaking direction of the eminent Mogens Wöldike. But the sound was a bit thin, and there seemed to be a minimum of enthusiasm. This new version is considerably superior. The tempi are brisker, the sound fuller, and the whole approach livelier and more understanding. This music does not have the sprawling magnificence and variety of the later *Dettingen Te Deum* (1743), but it is full of lovely sections on a smaller scale. It is also of great interest because it marked the first time Handel set an English text (the Anglican liturgy, of course, is in the vernacular), and this occasion is signaled by the first of Handel's occasional mis-stressings of an English word—"comforter" in the fourth section. But already in this work one can trace the elements of style that would later become so familiar. (Indeed, one theme from the final chorus later found its way, in the manner of so much Handel, into one of his later works, in this case the "Halleluja" chorus of *Messiah*.) This work, composed in 1713, actually included also, following the pattern of the Purcell model, the *Jubilate* which the earlier recording omitted and which is properly included here. It is splendid Handel. The best-known piece on the record is, of course, "Zadok the Priest", the first of the four Coronation Anthems composed for the coronation of George II in 1727. Its regular use for every British coronation since is a tribute not only to the greatness of the music and its composer, but also to

how well (if not always how wisely) the British have continued to love Handel. Of the five previous recordings I can trace, three of them under Sargent, this is surely the most authentic. It may lack the massive force of Sargent's newest recording (Capitol-EMI G-7141), the only present rival on LP, but it is refreshingly free from the distended and bloated re-orchestration with which that very imperfect Handelian has characteristically provided it. The recording is very good, though not necessarily up to the highest Deutsche Grammophon standards of clarity and balance. This is true particularly of the stereo version, where the separation is sometimes blurred. The chorus is often overshadowed by the orchestra, especially the trumpets, and the potentially ideal stereo effects of the double chorus, "Day by day we magnify thee" are rather muffled. But the stereo version does have its advantages, and can be recommended as preferable for those who have the equipment and the extra money. Even if the Handel bicentennial had produced a richer harvest of new releases this Archive recording would stand out as distinguished; and in view of the year's meager Handel pickings it is all the more welcome. It is also a pleasure to note that Decca Archive has finally modified the construction of its sleeves, eliminating the old flimsy design in favor of a somewhat more durable one.

—J.W.B.



HANDEL: *Water Music* (complete); Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam conducted by Eduard Van Beinum. Epic LC-3551, \$4.98.

Lehmann, Berlin.....Decca Archive 3010
▲THE twenty numbers are offered here pretty much as originally written, and also they are taken at the intended tempi (rather than with Harty's modifications, for instance). When a particular arrangement is utilized, as in No. 5, it is the Chrysander Edition. The playing, notably in the Bourrée, Hornpipe, and Maestoso, is excellent. But there virtue ends for this listener. The late Van Beinum's concept is styled along Lisztian lines; its delivery is symphonic and



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thick-sounding with enlarged dynamics and over-weighted tonalities. For those who like their Handel in a romantic profile, this performance is highly recommended. —A.K.

•
HAYDN: *Symphony No. 94 in G* ("Surprise"); **HANDEL-HARTY:** *Suite from "The Water Music"*; Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra conducted by William Steinberg. Capitol Stereo SP-8495, \$5.98.

HAYDN: *Symphony No. 94 in G* ("Surprise"); **BOCCHERINI:** *Overture in D; Symphony in C minor*; Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini. Angel Stereo S-35712, \$5.98.

⑤NOT the least notable thing about the Capitol disc is the fact that the engineers have finally solved the problems of recording in this hall. The various choirs of the orchestra are now evenly balanced and integrated, while the improved mike

placement and clarity of sound reveal anew the giant strides that this orchestra has taken. Under Steinberg's highly sensitive direction, both performances are utterly delectable and without peer on LP. The Haydn, which is a concept of buoyant effervescence, warm expressivity, and stylistic elegance, is quite in contrast to Giulini's interpretation, which is of Beethoven-like dimensions, weight, and texture. This skillful presentation, which moves faster throughout, is effective but altogether more serious in mood. For me, the Steinberg treatment is irresistible. The Angel release also offers highly polished accounts of Boccherini's merry little Overture in D (written in Italian Overture style) and the C minor Symphony, a work of great lyric beauty. Using reduced forces, Giulini expounds them freshly and with adroitness. Angel's reproduction is customarily well balanced and lower in recording level than Capitol's. Surfaces are noisy, however. —A.K.

'Das klagende Lied' up to date

By JACK DIETHER

WITH THIS capturing on records of the belated American première of Mahler's *Song of Lamentation*, one can feel that the Mahler year has finally begun in earnest in the record world. I had recent occasion to write of this work when the old Viennese recording was re-pressed by Lyrrichord (see the *ARG* for May, 1959), and am most gratified that my ardent wish for an up-to-date version has been unexpectedly fulfilled in our own country. The occasion is refreshing, and I hope propitious. *Das klagende Lied* and Schönberg's *Gurre-Lieder* are both in the line of "*Der fliegende Holländer*", the subjects and

treatments all being typical of the *Sturm-und-Drang* period of young romantic and revolutionary composers. Mahler's cantata celebrates a quasi-folk tale of fratricide and supernatural retribution, set to his own text based on Bechstein and Grimm (*Der singende Knochen*), and like all his work seems to be born of urgent internal necessity. We feel that unconsciously he is the wandering minstrel who upsets the established order by finding a "singing bone" in the forest, carving it into a flute and playing it before the guilty king, his bride, and the horrified court. "What think ye of my song?" ("*Was soll denn euch mein Singen?*"), the three soloists cry out in unison at the close of the first half; and at the very end everything is shattered asunder in a cataclysm of Samsonian as well as Oedipal proportions (*i. e.* symbolic on both the personal and social levels):

In terror the knights and their ladies flee.
The ancient ramparts crumble!
The lights in the kingly hall have ceased;

MAHLER: *Das klagende Lied*; Margaret Hoswell (soprano), Lili Chookasian (contralto), Rudolf Petrak (tenor), Hartford Symphony Orchestra and Chorale conducted by Fritz Mahler. Vanguard VRS-1048, \$4.98, or Stereo VSD-2044, \$5.95.

Fekete, Vienna State Opera. Lyrrichord 69

What now remains of the wedding feast? Ah sorrow!

Not exactly *gemütlich*, but ardently musical as always. In addition, the latter half of the work originally bore the ironic title of "Wedding Piece"!

It is well known that Mahler worked over this composition on more than one occasion between the ages of twenty (1880) and forty, when it was finally performed in close proximity to the Fourth Symphony. But the recent researches of Donald Mitchell in the autographs cast a new light upon them, as Deryck Cooke points out in the British journal *Tempo*: "Mr. Mitchell, who has examined the original sketch for Part I, and the original score of the same section, assures us that neither differs in any significant way from the cantata as we now have it. The intensely individual style is already there in the first complete work Mahler produced; and so is the fantastic Mahlerian orchestral timbre, which has been attributed to his experience as a conductor. In other words, Mahler was Mahler the composer before he began to become Mahler the conductor. Only as a bread-and-butter expedient did he [later] take up the baton he was never afterwards to lay down. This implies a radical reversal of the common view of Mahler the 'conductor-composer'." Here indeed is another significant step in the liberation of Mahler from the legend of detraction. Readers today may find it hard to believe, for example, that only a generation ago I found it a common heresy that Mahler's symphonies were orchestrated for him by Bruno Walter—whom he first met in 1894, when Walter was an operatic novice of eighteen and Mahler had already completed his Second Symphony!

To his previous distinction of introducing the Tenth to America eleven years ago, Fritz Mahler, son of a Mahler cousin, has now added this further première, and we can be grateful that the Mahler-loving Solomon brothers of Vanguard were not far away at the time. The besetting weakness of the Zoltan Fekete recording, as I have mentioned, is the vocal quality of the soloists: Steingruber, Wagner, and Majkut. They sound for the most part tired, spiritless and harsh, and these faults are only magnified by their close milking.

Added to this, at "Why is the king so mute and pale?" Miss Wagner's slur into the chromatic change on "*bleich*" (cue 55) is most unpleasant. As this was the only performance most of us have ever been privileged to hear until Vanguard's release, I hope that those who have studied the work intently from the old recording will be as thrilled as I was at finally hearing these parts *sung* rather than rendered in a hoarse parlendo. I suspect that a further revelation will be due when this neglected work eventually reaches the greatest Mahler interpreters. The solo parts are exceedingly demanding, and these singers, while very capable, show no outstanding affinity for Mahler's idiom. One of them, in fact, the soprano, was pressed into service as a last-minute substitute, and at the moment of denouement, where Mahler almost anticipates Schönberg in the leaping angularity of his vocal line for the final anguished song of the slain brother via the "singing bone" ("*Ach Bruder*", cue 73, including the leap of a tenth on "*twig klagen*"), Miss Hoswell can do little more than follow accurately but precariously from one note to the next. But for the present, the solo parts sound fresh as May after what we have endured.

The earlier songs of the bone-carved flute ("*Ach Spielmann*", cues 26 and 63) are given by Mahler to the contralto, but a footnote in the published score at the first entry adds, "Sung by a boy if possible". Mitchell makes no mention of this footnote, but cryptically remarks that "one extraordinarily interesting idea Mahler had at the first score stage was to have a boy's voice doubling, 'from afar', the contralto's delivery; the idea, in this form, is dropped in the revised version." Even more interesting is the fact that the manuscript score of Mahler's *Waldmärchen* (owned by Alfred Rosé), the completed but abandoned introductory section of *Das klagende Lied*, contains in addition a part for a bass singer. A study of the extensive text of this section (longer than either of the remaining sections), which Mr. Rosé sent me, persuades me that it should be seriously considered for reinstatement. From a dramatic standpoint alone, it clarifies the story considerably, since it

deals with the elder brother's crime, and his relationship to the younger. A knowledge of it would have prevented, for instance, some mistranslations in the English text provided with this record, such as "on this pretty carpet of flowers my brother slew me", instead of the double-entendre "for the sake of a pretty little flower my brother slew me" ("*Um ein schönfarbig Blümlein. . .*"). From this and similar lapses, in fact, it would appear that, whatever his musical reasoning, in eliminating the *Walzmärchen* Mahler left the essential motivation and course of the story unclear. The album notes, far from helping, are equally vague in this.

Fritz Mahler has a rather more flexible beat than Fekete. His 4½-minutes' shorter duration (34' in all) is principally due to a livelier conception of such passages as that of the jaunty "minstrel" theme (first heard at cue 6 in the Prelude), and some of the festal music in Part II, and the total effect is excellent. It would seem that Fekete does not follow the dynamics of the score as carefully as he, but it is difficult to know to what extent this is due to doctoring and leveling on the Vienna recording. It is certain that Fekete allows considerably more prominence to the gong, at cue 53 and just before the end, where the score has only *p* and *pp*, though in context I think this is a wholly justified liberty. But in general the Vienna sound is coarse and flat, though, as is recurrent in such cases, often clearer in the bass line. Vanguard has far greater depth even in the monophonic pressing, while in stereo the feeling of perspective is still further enhanced. And that is an essential ingredient of any Mahler performance. The composer's characteristic writing for two harps, basically unlike anyone else's, and already full developed in this work (e.g. the treading contrary motion at cue 58), is prominently revealed in the new version. The choral passages were extremely well delivered in Vienna, but there too the flattened recording characteristics scarcely did them justice; here they are always vibrant in sound even when very soft, swelling to climaxes of quite shattering impact, with impressive spread in stereo.

Only the "off-stage" wind and percus-

sion for the wedding festivities continue to give trouble—quite unnecessarily, I feel. Here they are much too close up, both in mono and stereo. (In my stereo copy there is also a brief unilateral power failure just after 47.) In the earlier recording, on the other hand, they sounded a little more distant, but were recorded separately and tape-edited in later, with very obvious seams showing. Both results are highly unsuitable, the Lyrichord lacking smoothness and the Vanguard lacking contrast. The passionate entries of the on-stage violins must overpower the festal "background" music as violently and realistically as Canio's outbursts do Columbine's heedless ditty. Indeed, it is quite possibly these dimensional effects which gave rise to the myth (repeated again in the current album notes) that the cantata was originally designed as an opera—though Mahler employs such devices liberally even in his symphonies, and increasingly with symbolic rather than naturalistic intent! In Strauss' *Alpine Symphony* (1915), for example, a cowbell is a cowbell, whereas in Mahler's Sixth (1904) it symbolizes "the earth's last salutation, far below, to the departing spirit". Thus the *Song of Lamentation* is like a somewhat earthier prelude to the Mahleresque musical cosmos we are gradually coming to know better.

●
MASSENET: "*Manon*"—*Je suis encore tout étourdie; Voyons, Manon, Plus de chimères; Duo de la Lettre; Adieu notre petite table; Le Rêve; Suis-je gentille ainsi?; Obéissons quand leur voix appelle; Duo de Saint-Sulpice; À nous les amours et les roses; Ninon Vallin (soprano) and Miguel Villabella (tenor) with orchestra. Pathé PCX-5002, \$5.95 (Import).*

▲ THIS set of recordings, the originals dating back more than twenty years, is uneven. I should have expected Ninon Vallin, at her best a lovely and gracious singer, to find the role of Manon more congenial than seems to be the case, though some of the trouble obviously is in the recording. In the first few numbers her voice lacks its familiar gloss; the tone is unwontedly thin and shrill. She does not

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convey to me the character of the simple young girl Manon should be in the first act. Things get better in the second; *Adieu notre petite table* has drama in it. But the voice does not sound as it should before the *Gavotte*. Something similar happens to Villabella. His *Rêve*, I am afraid, is a loss, quite lacking in smoothness and conviction. But the Saint-Sulpice duet brings forth good work from both artists.

—P.L.M.

●
MASSNET: "*Manon*"—*Je suis encore tout étourdie*; Ninon Vallin (soprano); *Ne branchez pas*; Roger Bourdin (baritone); *Voyons, Manon, plus de chimères*; Solange Delmas (soprano); *Nous vivrons à Paris*; Emma Luart (soprano); Charles Friant (tenor); *Duo de la Lettre*; Luart; Gaston Micheletti (tenor); *Adieux, notre petite table*; Vallin; *Le Rêve de Des Grieux*; Friant; *Je marche sur tous les chemins*; Luart; *Obéissons quand leurs voix appelle*; Vallin; *Épouse quelque brave fille*; Julien Lafont (basso); *Ah, fuyez, douce image*; André Burdino (tenor); *A nous les amours et les roses*; Luart. Odéon ORX-105, \$4.98.

▲HERE is a composite "*Manon*" for those who like to remember Paris between the wars. The ladies who share the title role were all favorites of the French public and all must have sung the part many times. Vallin, of whose Manon we have only recently had a fuller sample from Pathé, was probably the finest artist of them all, and she shows up well here, especially in the *Adieu* and the *Gavotte*. Luart has one of those shrillish French soprano voices and was probably more

effective on the stage than on discs. Delmas sings *Voyons, Manon* sweetly and effectively. Bourdin gives a character sketch of Lescart in his aria, one which only too often does not come off in American performances. Friant appears to be a serviceable tenor, but he has not the enveloping mezza voice called for in *Le Rêve*. Micheletti is a better artist, and Burdino even more successful in *Ah, fuyez*. All in all, then, here is a French opera sung by French artists of standing, but the results are somewhat disappointing. There are also problems of reproduction. I found the record plays best with its heavy bass drastically cut. —P.L.M.

●
MOUTET: "*Pacífico*"; Bourvil, Georges Guétary and others, with orchestra conducted by Jo Moutet. Pathé ATX-133, \$5.95 (Import).

▲THIS operetta, by Jo Moutet and Paul Nivoix, opened in Paris on November 16, 1958. The monthly bulletin *World Premières* summed it up thus: "Series of sketches, intermingled with songs, with a nebulous theme which is only an excuse to take the audience to the Pacific region, through night clubs, flea market and American palaces." But what mattered, I suspect, was the presence of two stars, Bourvil and Guétary. There are others assisting in this recording, but their names do not appear on the jacket. The whole affair is a romp, and it should appeal to the kind of collector who used to wait impatiently for the latest issues of Charles Trenet. For my own taste the high spot on the disc is the duet *Je t'aime bien*, which the inimitable Bourvil sings with Pierette Bruno. —P.L.M.

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IT IS GOOD for once to hear an American opera whose composer, a master of his craft, knows precisely how to bring off what he sets out to do. There are no loose ends in this score. Because Douglas Moore is not afraid to write romantic music when the occasion calls for it he is able to underline the tense scenes in John Latouche's libretto. What is more, he knows how to treat a voice; the singers are allowed and encouraged to sing.

This may not quite add up to "the great American opera"—one can't quite see Baby Doe and Horace Tabor taking

MOORE: "The Ballad of Baby Doe"; Beverly Sills (Mrs. Elizabeth "Baby" Doe); Frances Bible (Augusta Tabor); Walter Cassel (Horace Tabor); Grant Williams (An Old Silverminer; Father Chappelle; Stage Doorman); Chester Ludgin (A Saloon Bartender; A Denver Politician); Jack DeLon (Sam; Chester A. Arthur); Keith Kaldenberg (Bushy; Clerk); George Del Monte (Barney); Arthur Newman (Jacob; Footman); Greta Wolff (Kate); Helen Baisley (Mag; Silver Dollar); Lynda Jordan (Samantha); Robert Atherton (Albert); Mary Lesawyer (Sarah); Jennie Andrea (Mary); Lou Rodgers (Emily); Dorothy White (Effie); Beatrice Krebs (Mama McCourt); Edson Hoel, Dan Marek, Peter Sliker, John Dennison (Four Washington Dandies); Greta Wolff, Helen Baisley, Donald Arthur, William Saxon (McCourt Family); Lynn Taussig (Elizabeth); William Saxon (Mayor of Leadville); Joshua Hecht (William Jennings Bryan); New York City Center Chorus and Orchestra, conducted by Emerson Buckley. M-G-M set 3GC-1, six sides, \$11.94.

their places in the same living gallery with Boris Godunov, Mimi, Tosca, Hans Sachs, and Baron Ochs—nor does it seem altogether likely that the various effective arias will vie for the place on recital programs now held by *Vissi d'arte*, Don José's *Flower Song* and *O tu Palermo*.

How many times one will want to return to hear "Baby Doe" is, of course, the crucial question. The story is openly romantic, a bit corny if you will, and Moore has given it just the kind of music it calls for. This is the opera's strength, and it may possibly be also its undoing. The cast in this recording is well seasoned in the music, some of the singers having taken part in the première at Central City as well as in the production at New York's City Center.

I suspect that the appeal of the opera could be enhanced by more distinguished vocalism. Miss Sills, for example, has a sweet and attractive voice which sounds well most of the time, but it loses focus in some of the higher passages. Remarkably enough, however, in her *Willow* song, the high D is better than the B flat. Miss Bible, too, starts out rather unsteadily, perhaps in her anxiety to create a live character, though she improves as the work progresses. Walter Cassel gives a good straightforward account of the role of Horace Tabor, and Beatrice Krebs is very fine as Baby Doe's mother.

Subtlety is not the long suit of this cast, though I think a little more of it would help matters. Buckley keeps the music moving; one doesn't go to sleep at this show. There is some unevenness in the reproduction, some variation in the volume level, but not enough to be really disturbing. In the final scene Tabor's visions are all a bit too strong.

—P.L.M.

An irresistible coupling

MOZART: *Sinfonia Concertante in E flat, K. Anh. 9 (E. 297b), for Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn, and Orchestra;*

HAYDN: *Sinfonia Concertante in B flat Op. 84, for Oboe, Bassoon, Violin, Cello, and Orchestra;* John de Lancie (oboe), Anthony Gigliotti (clarinet), Bernard Garfield (bassoon), Mason Jones (horn), Jacob Krachmalnick (violin), Lorne Munroe (cello), Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML-5374, \$4.98, or Stereo MS-6061, \$5.98.

HERE are two first-class works, early Mozart (composed 1778) and late Haydn (composed 1791-2), both in the same idiom. This idiom is not, as so many annotators blindly keep repeating, a reflection of the baroque *concerto grosso* style, something that would have been too anachronistic for the era of these two composers. Rather, the style is one very much a part of their era—the *concertante* style, plainly indicated in these titles. What this meant was orchestral music with an interweaving, not of solo performers in the concerto sense, but of instrumental performers playing solo passages at various times and in various combinations. The aim was to present contrasts, not of masses as in the *concerto grosso*, but of colors and textures. There could not be two better—or more lovely—demonstrations of the idiom than this pair of works.

The Mozart has particular grace, warmth, serenity, and elegance; his infallible knowledge of wind sonorities was never more surely displayed. Here it serves as a fine vehicle for the talents of this orchestra's first-desk wind players. The work served the same purpose some years back when Stokowski led his Philadelphia Orchestra in a 78 r.p.m. recording which was briefly available again on Camden CAL-213; of the soloists in that version only one (Mason Jones) is still around for this new recording. The playing is beautiful on all counts, al-

though one detects a slightly pushed quality—perhaps Ormandy wanted to be sure he could fit the performance (about thirty-two minutes) on one LP side. Of the three other recordings of this work now available, only Von Karajan's, featuring the superb Philharmonia winds, is competitive. Unfortunately, Angel could think of no more imaginative filler for it than the inescapable *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*.

The Haydn work is perky and zestful, full of the most good-natured humor of which this composer was capable. Composed for the first of his visits to London, it first saw the light of music desks on March 9, 1792 and thus fits into the midst of that great procession of masterpieces, the "Salomon" symphonies. At the first performance Salomon himself, as concertmaster, played the solo violin part. The playing here is undoubtedly a good deal more lush than Salomon's forces could have imagined (or produced), perhaps even a bit too much so. But it is too lovely for us to complain about it, especially since this is the only recording currently available out of a total to date of five. The earlier two on LP, one for Mercury under Rieger made in Munich (MG-10116) and one from Stuttgart under Reinhardt for Vox (PL-7390) have long since disappeared from circulation. On shellac there was one under Munch, and another done by the Danish State Radio Orchestra under the expert Fritz Busch for HMV that should have reached LP but never did, at least in this country. This fine Ormandy version is thus all we have at the moment, and we are the richer for it. The present coupling should prove irresistible. The sound of the monophonic version is fabulous, of great clarity and richness—so much so that the stereo version is little improvement, and any directional advantages it might have had are lost in elusive and fluctuating balances that I had great difficulty adjusting.

—J.W.B.

MOZART: *Piano Concerto No. 25 in C, K. 503*; **BEETHOVEN:** *Piano Concerto No. 4 in G, Op. 58*; Leon Fleisher (piano); Cleveland Orchestra conducted By George Szell. Epic LC-3574, \$4.98.

(Mozart)
Serkin, Szell.....Columbia ML-5169
(Beethoven)
Serkin, Ormandy.....Columbia ML-5037

▲FOR several reasons I suspect that Szell's preferences motivated these presentations. The Mozart, though precise and spirited, is utterly cold and impersonal in tone in much the same manner as the accounts of K. 456 and K. 466 by Casadeus (Columbia ML-5276) and, to a slightly lesser degree, those by Serkin of the K. 453 and this same K. 503 (Columbia ML-5169), all with Szell conducting. Yet Serkin with Schneider as the orchestral collaborator had, just the year before, recorded the K. 467 and K. 595 with winsome charm and warm radiance. In the present delineation of Beethoven's Fourth Concerto it is the conductor who, through the lengthy orchestral introduction, sets the mood, which Fleisher maintains throughout. Here the results are entirely creditable, for the outlook is properly warm and mellow. This is, in fact, probably the most sensitive playing that Fleisher has given us on records, and this Beethoven Fourth is one of the best. The orchestra is recorded with considerable distance between it and the soloist. The over-all sound is a bit cloudy. —A.K.

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MOZART: *Symphony No. 32 in G, K. 318*; *Symphony No. 38 in D, K. 504*; London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Peter Maag. London Stereo CS-6107, \$4.98.

(K. 504)
Klemperer, Philharmonia.....Angel S-35408

⑤THAT the vivacious little Symphony in G so rarely is heard on concert programs has always puzzled me. Both its brevity (one-movement Italian Overture style) and its intrinsic good humor would seem to make it a perfect opening number. Were the matter up to Peter Maag, who leads these discriminating accounts, there would be no question whatever, for here is a dedicated advocate of Mozart if ever there was one. These qualities are obvious not only in the painstaking care

shown the slightest details of phrasing, dynamics, bowing, and balance, but also in the fact that all repeat signs are honored—including those of the *andante* in the K. 504, which happens to be the only movement in which Maag's preference for slow tempi and full repeats is slightly more than can be sustained throughout without some loss of listening interest. Apart from this qualification, his spirited and precise direction is only praiseworthy. London's engineers have done handsomely, too. —A.K.

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POULENC: *Litanies à la Vierge Noire*; **FAURÉ:** *Messe Basse*; *Tantum ergo*, Op. 65, No. 2; **BARTÓK:** *Six Chansons populaires hongrois*; **HONEGGER:** *Cantique de Pâques*; *Maitrise d'Enfants et Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française*; Henriette Roger (organ), conducted by Jacques Jouineau. Pathé DTX-247, \$5.95 (Import).

▲IN his biography of Poulenc (translated by Edward Lockspeiser, London: John Calder, 1959) Henri Hell gives us the background for the *Litanies to the Black Virgin*. It seems that the composer's early religious training had been very strict, which accounts for the singularly sincere and devout expression we find in his sacred choral works. Near his ancestral home is the Sanctuary of Rocamadour, with its black statue of the Virgin, a shrine to which he had always felt himself drawn. On receiving the news of the death of his friend, the composer and critic Pierre-Octave Ferroud, Poulenc made a pilgrimage to this Sanctuary. "The evening of this visit, he began the composition of the *Litanies à la Vierge Noire*, for women's or children's voices and organ, on a text of one of the pilgrims' recitations. These rustic musical prayers, of which the organ accompaniment recalls the chapel harmonium, display the simple fervour, the mingled sweetness and humility that are to emanate from all Poulenc's religious works. The religious writer and playwright, Henri Ghéon, was right in discerning in the poignant opening phrase of three notes, on the words *Ayez pitié*, the revelation of the composer's

inner soul." The date of composition is 1936. The Fauré *Mass* is a youthful composition, though first published in 1907. For those who know and love the *Requiem* this early setting, comprising only the *Kyrie Eleison*, *Sanctus*, *Benedictus* and *Agnus Dei*, will have a special fascination. Already the textural clarity, the masterfully simple cadences, the hallmark of Fauré, are unmistakably recognizable. The *Tantum ergo*, which like the *Mass* is for three voice parts with incidental solos, makes an appropriate pendant. All these works and the complex folksong settings of Bartók benefit by the youthful quality of the well-trained children's choir that sings them. Honegger's jubilant *Cantique* for Easter, dating from 1924, enlists also a group of soloists, obviously not children. The program, begun so quietly, thus ends on a strong affirmative note. —P.L.M.

PROKOFIEV: *Sinfonia Concertante for Cello and Orchestra, Op. 125*; Mstislav Rostropovich (cello); Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Kurt Sanderling; **SHOSTAKOVICH:** *Concertino for Two Pianos, Op. 94*; Maxim and Dmitri Shostakovich (duo-pianists). Monitor MC-2040, \$4.98.

(Prokofiev)

Rostropovich; Sargent, Royal Phil. Capitol G-7121

▲THE *Sinfonia Concertante*, which Prokofiev reworked from his Second Cello Concerto (1952), is a splendid work, and it receives the finest performance imaginable from Rostropovich, for whom it was written. It is extremely well constructed, brilliantly orchestrated, and combines all the elements, particularly the grotesque and diabolic, which form the basis of the composer's style. Rostropovich has also recorded the *Sinfonia Concertante* for Capitol-EMI with Sir Malcolm Sargent and the Royal Philharmonic; in each case the cellist's playing is astounding for the wealth of expression, the marvelous tone quality, and the incredible intonation, and a choice between the two recordings must depend on recording techniques. Capitol has much the more distant microphone placement for both soloist and orchestra; here the cello is almost a part of the ensemble. Monitor's Russian-made version has Rostropovich quite close up,

and although the sound consequently is not as one might hear it in a concert hall, one becomes more aware of details and subtleties in his playing. Even though the English disc is exceptionally clean and brilliant in the pick-up of the orchestra, I must mention that the Monitor recording, if not quite its equal, is nevertheless one of the very best of Russian origin that I have heard. The Shostakovich *Concertino*, written for the composer's son and played by both members of the family here, is a pleasant bonus. Written in 1954, the work is in one movement and is typical of Shostakovich's playful and witty style. It is quite short (eight minutes), exceedingly brilliant, and very effectively played by the composer and his son. —I.K.

PROKOFIEV: *Symphony No. 5, Op. 100* (1944); Paris Conservatoire Orchestra conducted by Jean Martinon. RCA Victor LM-2272, \$4.98, or Stereo LSC-2272, \$5.98.

Ormandy.....Columbia ML-5260
Koussevitzky.....RCA Victor LVT-1026
Schippers.....Angel 35527

§THIS is a good performance but one which does not always reach to the heart of the music. To single out an example, the "funeral march" episode towards the middle of the third movement lacks here the enormous gravity and tension which it is given in Ormandy's performance. In general, the latter's reading is superior to Martinon's in matters of detail and clarity (although this may be due partly to better recording techniques), but the striking difference is really apparent in Ormandy's skill in handling the magnificent Philadelphia Orchestra, which plays the music with such beauty of tone as to leave the Paris Conservatoire far, far behind. The monophonic version by Martinon is satisfactory but not outstanding. Both it and the more impressive stereo disc suffer from a slight deadness in acoustics as well as slight harshness in the louder passages of both strings and brasses. The stereo recording has considerable separation and sufficient depth (it is a remarkable improvement over the mono disc in this respect), but lacks the requisite beauty of tone. —I.K.

'War and Peace'— Prokofiev's Tolstoy

By C. J. LUTEN

EVEN AS Napoleon found Russia too vast to conquer, so Prokofiev has come a cropper with Tolstoy's mammoth *War and Peace*. A brief history of how this opera came to be is indicative of the result. Prokofiev worked on the project during the last twelve years of his life, casting his opera into various molds during that time. The first version, in four acts and ten scenes, was completed within fifteen months and presented at the Maly Theatre in Leningrad on April 18, 1942. Dissatisfied, he made a longer, second attempt which was planned for two evenings. The first eight scenes were performed at the Maly Theatre in June, 1946; the other scenes have never been produced, and there are doubts that these latter episodes were ever actually finished in Prokofiev's mind. The composer condensed material from the second version into five acts and eleven scenes; and it is this composition that America heard for the first time in a production by the NBC Television Opera Company and which is here recorded for the first time.

The opera begins with a brief prelude that reminds one of the style and emotional content of certain numbers in Prokofiev's ballet *Romeo and Juliet*. Then the curtain rises on a nocturnal setting in the garden of Rostov's estate. Andrei, who is visiting the Rostovs, meditates on the pain and sorrow of life. Following his aria, Natasha appears on a balcony with Sonya. She observes the beauty of the May even-

ing; and there ensues a duet between her and Sonya that could one day be as popular as the blossom duet from "*Madama Butterfly*", which it resembles in the degree of its refulgence. It is one of the memorable lyrical passages in an opera regrettably short of good vocal melodies. Andrei watches Natasha and, after the two women depart, sings an optimistic aria which contrasts with his opening song to give the first scene a neat musical and dramatic framework.

The second scene takes place at a ball where Natasha and Andrei dance together for the first time. It opens with a polonaise, heavily resplendent but without gaiety; a gently choral drinking song which is not without charm accompanies the arrival of guests. A mazurka follows, and Natasha dances with Dolokhov. Andrei cuts in; Prokofiev reminds the enchanted couple of the first scene—now in $\frac{3}{4}$ time—and the waltz fades away.

Rostov brings his daughter Natasha to meet Andrei's father, Prince Bolkonsky, in the third scene. The old prince's rude behavior (he never says a numberlin' word and this is his only appearance in the opera—what a walk-on part!) makes Natasha realize he has sent his son Andrei away for a year in the hope that their love will cool. The scene introduces Mary (another important character in Tolstoy's novel), for what reason only Prokofiev knows (she has so little to do), and gives Natasha the opportunity to express her need for Andrei and her fear that he may not return for their marriage to be effected.

The setting for the fourth scene is the living room and adjoining ballroom in the house of Helene and Pierre (the protagonist of Tolstoy's novel but one of the most shadowy figures in the annals of opera as Prokofiev presents him; surely this is carrying condensation for the sake of opera

PROKOFIEV: "*War and Peace*"; Werner Janssen conducting the Vienna State Opera Orchestra and Vienna Kammerchor, with Radmila Vasovic-Bokacevic, soprano (Natasha); Dusan Popovic, baritone (Andrei); Djordje Djurdjevic, bass (Kontouzov); and other soloists of the National Opera of Belgrade. M-G-M Stereo set S3-GC2, six sides, \$17.98.

to its outer limits). The composer gives us a nice glimpse of Helene's shallowness and cruelty in the opening pages of this section. There follows the appearance of the ne'er-do-well Anatole, who offers protestations of love to Natasha; Natasha, overwhelmed, comments on her excitement and indecision (unfortunately the comment lies mainly in the text rather than in the music). Sonya scolds Natasha for her thoughts; Rostov objects to his daughter's overstaying at a place that frankly strikes him as immoral.

The next scene is devoted to a discussion of the machinations of Dolokhov to aid Anatole in eloping with Natasha. Dolokhov tells Anatole about the fake passport and marriage license, the getaway troika, and the horses. A very dull affair.

Scene six, which details Maria Dmitrievna Akhrosimova's prevention of the elopement, Natasha's humiliation. Pierre's sudden appearance and his attempt to comfort Natasha, and Natasha's abortive effort at suicide, should have made rattling good musical theater. It is, instead, distinctly uninspired, with neither atmospheric orchestral writing nor expressive vocal lines.

We are now at Borodino just before the famous battle. Characters such as Tikhon, Feodor, Trishka, Matveyz, and Vassilissa appear and sing one line at most. Denisov enters, looking for Andrei, finds him, and lengthily asks him (without lisp, by the way) for 500 men to use in guerrilla action against the French. Andrei then ponders his own fate, his plan of action, and his feelings about Natasha. After a brief "meeting-farewell" with Pierre, Andrei approaches General Koutouzov, who has made his entrance with a platoon of soldiers, and resigns from the military staff. The general appreciates Andrei's reasons, blesses him, and affirms his belief in eventual victory. Both exit under cover of a spirited soldiers' chorus in praise of Koutouzov.

The eighth scene takes place in the French encampment of Napoleon, who is heard predicting the Russians' defeat and his acceptance of an offer of the keys to Moscow. Reports from the Borodino

battlefield come in, and they are not the expected ones; Napoleon falls victim to doubt. In this exceedingly weak episode, Napoleon is a person of no definable character in musical terms. Moreover, the composer relays no excitement in the changing moods of his situation.

Now we are witness to a Russian council of war wherein Koutouzov decides to retreat rather than to attack. Here we have the aria by the general, *Fairest Moscow*, which was so enthusiastically received by critics who heard the NBC-TV production of "War and Peace". It does boast a strong, simple melody and makes its dramatic point; but the aria definitely does not constitute the peak of the opera, as one had been led to believe (at least not in this presentation).

The tenth scene deals with the wounded and dying Andrei's delirium and his meeting with Natasha. The delirium passages seize the imagination; the repeated sound of "piti" by the chorus is an effective touch, one that calls to mind some of the effects in an earlier Prokofiev opera, "The Flaming Angel". But Andrei's meeting with Natasha, which should have been the emotional climax of the opera, is not. Their duet, in particular, has little charm or impact, and the entire episode ends on a disquieting note, without the peace and repose the drama would seem to require.

The final scene is built around a victory celebration chorus of a conventional nature, recalling at its best a few turns of phrase and harmonies *à la Nevsky*.

I have taken the trouble to give a synopsis of this opera to stress its dramatic shortcomings and to indicate its fitful musical effectiveness. As for its fidelity to the spirit of Tolstoy's novel, there can be little doubt that it is as a trout compared with an elephant: both are God's creatures and there the resemblance ends. A stronger vocal performance and a recording more fully exploiting the resources of stereo probably would have provided a better impression of the work. But even these assets could not have rescued what must be called a weak opera, graced though it is by Prokofiev's professional manner and a few high spots of genuine music drama.

PURCELL: "*The Tempest*"—*Arise, ye subterranean winds; Aeolus, you must appear; Your awful voice I hear; Halcyon days; See, see, the heavens smile; Sonata in D for Trumpet and Strings; "The Virtuous Wife"—March, Minuets I and II; "Diolesian"—What shall I do?; Chacony in G minor;* Jennifer Vyvyan (soprano), William Herbert (tenor), Hervey Alan (bass), Dennis Egan (trumpet), Philomusica of London conducted by Anthony Lewis. London/Oiseau-Lyre Stereo (only) SOL-60002, \$5.98.

Voisin, Ensemble (Sonata only)

Kapp KCL-9017(-S)
New Music Quartet (Chacony).....Bartók BRS-913
Litschauer, Vienna Orch. (Chacony)

Vanguard VRS-420

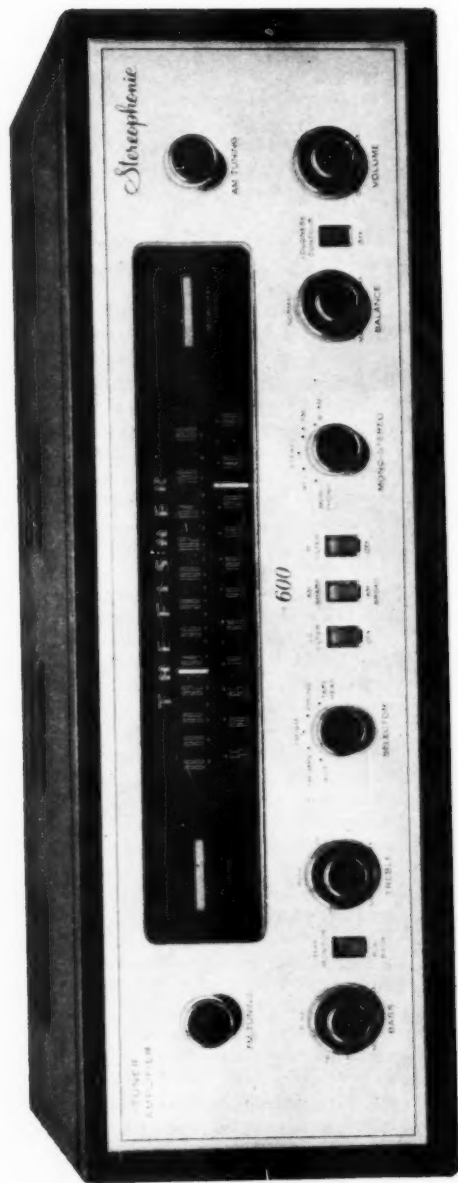
§THE decision by London to continue American distribution of releases on this affiliate label is surely welcome news. To be sure, this involves only new releases, and only certain ones at that, but the few that have come so far, and those that are promised, indicate that even this trickle is a blessing not to be scorned. The present Purcell record is a case in point. The five vocal excerpts from "*The Tempest*" which occupy side one are tantalizing reminders of what we are missing by not having the complete score. As it is, they are done very well. Hervey Alan sings the first two and the last very impressively, and William Herbert does very well with the third. But special commendation should go to Jennifer Vyvyan, who makes *Halcyon Days*, as well as the *What shall I do?* on the other side, listening of indescribable beauty and satisfaction. The Trumpet Sonata is the same piece as that performed on a Kapp recording as part of a motley program of trumpet solos but the performance here is far better than the brassy and vulgar treatment by Voisin, and this recording sound is much more appealing than the weird sonic distortions of the Kapp disc. The three of the nine instrumental pieces Purcell wrote for D'Urfe's "*The Virtuous Wife*" are delightful. The only disappointment is the wonderful G minor Chacony, or Chaconne. One of Purcell's noblest and most beautiful instrumental works, it is played here at such a rapid and bouncy tempo that its effect

is completely spoiled. There is already a fine recording in Whittaker's arrangement for string orchestra on a Vanguard disc. But for my money the finest record of this work was that by the New Music String Quartet on the Bartók label, a grave and deeply felt performance that makes this piece of "absolute" music one of the most emotionally moving experiences I know. Otherwise the performances here are of the highest quality, and beautifully recorded in full, well-distributed stereo sound. Texts are included in the jacket notes. —J.W.B.

RAVEL: *Ma Mère L'Oye*; **DUKAS:** *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*; **SAINT-SAËNS:** *Omphale's Spinning Wheel, Op. 31*; Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch. RCA Victor LM-2252, \$4.98, or Stereo LSC-2252, \$5.98.

(Ravel)
Gullini, Phil.....Angel 354622
Koussevitzky, Boston.....RCA Victor LM-1012
Argenta, Cento Soli Orch.....Omega 103
Paray, Detroit.....Mercury MG-50145
(Dukas)
Mitropoulos, N. Y. Phil.....Columbia ML-5198
Paray, Detroit.....Mercury MG-50035
(Saint-Saëns)
Mitropoulos, N. Y. Phil.....Columbia ML-5154

§ONE must take exception to Deems Taylor's assertion (in the liner notes) that "all three of these compositions were written by composers who were not taking themselves seriously at the moment". Does the fact that *Ma Mère L'Oye* was originally written as a piano duet for children in any way compromise the seriousness of Ravel's purpose? And surely an examination of Dukas' involved and masterful instrumentation would hastily dispel any inferences of frivolity. How Mr. Taylor applies his supposition to the Saint-Saëns symphonic poem is beyond me. That Munch takes this music seriously is obvious from the outset, for both he and the orchestra are at their best in the French repertory. Each offering is in its own way compelling in treatment, but there should be a special commendation for Doriot Anthony Dwyer's outstandingly beautiful flute playing in the Ravel. In the final tableau of this rewarding performance the BSO strings glow with the radiance and shimmering effervescence of old. One could cavil with



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the extraordinarily fast tempo of the Saint-Saëns, and perhaps complain that the opening bassoon statement of the Dukas is barely audible above the accompaniment, but there is no denying the strong effectiveness of either delineation. Except for the distant bassoon, sound throughout is excellent. —A.K.

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RESPIGHI: *Ancient Dances and Airs for Lute—Suites Nos. 1, 2, and 3*; Philharmonia Hungarica conducted by Antal Dorati. Mercury MG-50199; \$3.98.

Ferrara..... RCA Victor LM-2179
▲THESE delightful suites are given a very ingratiating performance by Dorati and the Philharmonia Hungarica, who again confirm the excellent impression this orchestra has made both on records and in concert. They are a fine ensemble with an especially good string tone, and they play this music with a great deal of style and verve. If Franco Ferrara's splendid reading with the Rome Symphony has the benefit of the ultimate in vivacity (his *Bergamasca* from the second suite, for instance, has a dash and infectious quality which Dorati simply does not achieve), it is not nearly so well recorded as the Mercury disc, which technically is a very superior example of engineering. —I.K.

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RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Russian Easter Overture; Suite from "Le coq d'or"*; **BALAKIREV:** *Isamey*; Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Sir Eugene Goossens. Capitol EMI G-7158, \$4.98.

(*Russian Easter*)
Fiedler, Boston Pops..... RCA Victor LM-2202
(*"Coq d'or"* Suite)
Fiedler, Boston Pops..... RCA Victor LM-2100

▲POPULAR as they are, neither of the Rimsky works evidences any great subtlety of musical thinking; they are frankly subjective and almost totally ethnic in rhythmic and melodic utilization. In consequence, Goossens' typically English approach—dramatic understatement, slow tempi, and dynamic restraint—does questionable service to this music. The suite from "*Le coq d'or*" is especially weak here because its extended lyric sections (not to mention the more animated ones) are all taken at tempi that cannot sustain

interest. In the *Russian Easter* things actually move along much faster than they should at times, but the lack of enthusiasm, inner drive, and instrumental coloring make it seem otherwise. Balakirev's *Isamey* fares considerably better. A few errors in execution have crept into the normally flawless delivery of the Philharmonia, most evidently at bar 138 of the first "*Coq d'or*" episode (where a trumpet makes a slip) and at bar 20 of the third (when an English horn does likewise). Goossens momentarily loses control of the orchestra at bars 156-157 of the *Russian Easter*, but quickly brings the various choirs back to metric unity. The sound is very good. —A.K.

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SAINT-SAËNS: "*Samson et Dalila*"; Hélène Bouvier (Dalila); José Luccioni (Samson); Paul Cabanel (Grand Priest); Charles Cambon (Abimelech); Henri Médus (An Old Hebrew); Paris Opéra Chorus and Orchestra, conducted by Louis Fourestier. Pathé set PCX-5007-9, six sides, \$17.85 (Import).

▲HERE is the same old "*Samson and Delilah*" back again under a new label. Strangely, it is still the only complete recording of the popular work, the only really French one, and certainly in all respects the preferred one. Not that it is definitive. The recording, more than ten years old, is at best a bit thick in sound. The performance is about what we might expect to hear in Paris. The singers are all very good. Bouvier has a true Delilah voice, rich and velvety, and Lucioni combines power with a sweet quality as Samson. I do not know where a better pair of protagonists could be found today. Cambon, Cabanel, and Médus are old hands, tried and true. If nothing really memorable comes out of this excellent assembly of talent I think we may blame the conductor, who is able enough but not sensational. —P.L.M.

•
SCHMITT: *Quatuor à Cordes, Op. 112*; Quatuor Champeil. Pathé DTX-232, \$5.95 (Import).

▲IT seems likely that Florent Schmitt will be remembered as a connoisseurs' composer, though he is credited with vigor,

eloquence, and passion as well as extraordinary musical wit. In the long list of his works there is only this one string quartet, and it dates from 1947-48, when he was a ripe seventy-seven. Michel Brigue, who has contributed the jacket notes (in French), finds in the work "the synthesis of a half-century of music made by a spirit anchored in its past glory, but living in a present created by its own unalterable and unlikely youth." The composer's own analysis, printed at the head of the score, is reproduced here. To the four movements he gives the titles *Rêve*, *Jeu*, *In Memoriam*, and *Élan*. Something of Schmitt's musical humor may be sampled in the second and last

of these, while the third is a tribute to the memory of the "*grands Morts*": Chopin, Chabrier, Fauré, Borodine, Rimsky... Albéniz" and other "*Morts*" still be born. The quartet is a work of tremendous difficulty, and Brigue tells of the months of preparation that went into this performance. This is typical of Schmitt's works, which, however, "are not unplayable, for they are played." The achievement of the Champeil Quartet is a musical as well as a technical triumph; a new and striking work has been added to the repertoire. And the four musicians have not been unrewarded, for this fine recording earned for them the Grand Prix du Disque 1959.

—P.L.M.

Two stereo versions of the 'Trout'

SCHUBERT: *Quintet in A, Op. 114* ("Trout"); Paul Badura-Skoda (piano), Barylli Quartet members, Otto Ruhm (double-bass). Westminster Stereo WST-14074, \$5.98.

Nádás, Galimir, etc. Period S-730
Badura-Skoda, Konzerthaus, West. XWN 18264
©BADURA-SKODA'S second "Trout" on LP gives a far less favorable impression than the first, which was released six or seven years ago. The older one contained what I still feel to be the best performance of the piano part; the Vienna Konzerthaus Quartet, however, cursed that performance with its customary attention to avoidance of vibrato rather than to any true complementing of the pianist. The new recording is by no means poor, but it has certain failings that cannot be easily ignored. Skoda still plays with a certain measure of yarmth and the *andantino* is brought off with great skill and charm; but in many places the pianist fails to keep the pace going and indulges in the kind of choppy, poking playing that has characterized so much of his recent work. The quartet is admirably smooth, but the sound they produce is always subservient to that of the piano, with the cello in particular failing to come through. My favorite "Trout" is still the one by Istvan Nádás and a group of New

York players including Felix Galimir, Karen Tuttle, Laszlo Varga, and Julius Levine. This is by no means the most nearly perfect version imaginable—violinist Galimir is guilty of the age-old musician's crime of speeding up in the louder passages—but on the whole this group's spirited, well-balanced version (also on stereo) is a pleasure. —H.G.

•
SCHUBERT: "*Trout*" *Quintet*; Clifford Curzon (piano) with members of the Vienna Octet. London Stereo CS-6090, \$4.98.

©CURZON, one of today's best performers of the Schubert piano literature, is for some dim reason poorly represented on records in precisely this area. Accordingly, this new recording of the ever delightful "Trout" *Quintet*, presented by Curzon and a group of splendid string players from the Vienna Philharmonic, has been eagerly anticipated. As was expected, their performance turns out to be skillful, sensitive and musically informed. It is, however, recorded in a manner substandard to London's average level of excellence. The recording is oppressive with bass, and the violin and viola are too distant to balance with the rest of the group.
—C.J.L.

SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 9 in C*; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Rafael Kubelik. Capitol-EMI Stereo SG-7195, \$5.98.

Krips, London Sym. London 6061
§ THIS disc represents honest value, but nothing it offers seems to me in any way memorable. The performance and the recording are acceptable, to be sure; and if one were to encounter playing of this caliber in a concert hall one would leave with nothing in the way of a bad aftertaste. Kubelik has simply given a good, routine reading of this superb symphony. Something better than that awaits the listener who chooses the splendid London recording of Josef Krips' performance. There is something to remember. —C.J.L.

•
SCHUMANN: *Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54; Carnaval, Op. 9*; Sergio Fiorentino (piano) with the Hamburg Pro Musica Orchestra conducted by Erich Reide (in the concerto). Forum F-70007, \$1.98.

▲ FIORENTINO has great dramatic flair, a fine range of expression, and a fabulous technique. What he lacks is discretion in using these attributes. Aside from occasional flattening and raggedness in entrances, the orchestra does a creditable job. The sound is faulty in balance between the solo instrument and the ensemble. —A.K.

•
SCHUMANN: *Symphony No. 1 in B flat, Op. 38 ("Spring"); Manfred Overture, Op. 115*; Cleveland Orchestra conducted by George Szell. Epic LC-3612, \$4.98.

▲ FOLLOWING Szell's truly glorious account of the Second Symphony some years ago (Columbia ML-4817), one waited with increasing anticipation for some sign of another Schumann symphony by the same forces. One has finally arrived, and with it keen disappointment, for the spontaneous exuberance and razor-sharp orchestral definition that made the former reading so compelling is nowhere evident here. Instead, overly-slow tempi, an uncouth lack of incisiveness, and far less *esprit* give the entire delineation a heavy, pedantic complexion. *Manfred*

is expounded with far more imaginative feeling. Epic's reproduction is clean, but the strings tend toward a thinner sound than usual in the larger work. —A.K.

•
SCHUMANN: *Symphony No. 1 in B flat, Op. 38 ("Spring"); Manfred Overture, Op. 115*; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Rudolf Kempe. Capitol-EMI G-7117, \$4.98.

▲ INTENSITY of an almost intimate kind marks these performances. Kempe's approach is romantic and yet impersonal; lush, but tonally cool. The Berliners do not perform with the tonal weight that we are used to in this country. This produces an almost ethereal quality, which you may or may not like. I, for one, prefer my Schumann more richly textured. Good sound. —D.H.M.

•
SOLER: *Twelve Sonatas (C, M. 10; C minor, M. 11; C minor, M. 12; B flat, M. 13; E flat, M. 14; D flat, M. 15; B, M. 16; E minor, M. 17; F sharp, M. 18; F sharp minor, M. 19; G minor, M. 20; & G minor, M. 21)*; Frederick Marvin (piano). Decca DL-10008, \$4.98.

▲ FOLLOWING Frederick Marvin's first recording for Decca of nine Soler Sonatas and that composer's fantastic *Fandango* (DL-9937), here is the second volume with twelve more sonatas. Marvin is a brilliant pianist, and he makes the most of the possibilities in these colorful works. Tempi are sometimes a little overly fast, but over-all this is a highly enjoyable disc. I would, however, prefer to have the opportunity of hearing these same pieces recorded on the harpsichord. Marvin maintains that Soler was familiar with the pianoforte, since the Escorial had one at the time when he first came there, and on the basis of this fact Marvin argues that the piano was the instrument chosen for this particular music. The pianoforte of that time, however, was far removed from the modern piano we hear in this recording, and it is unlikely, to my way of thinking, that Soler would have preferred this weak-toned forerunner to the more colorful and well-established harpsichord. Johann Sebastian Bach,



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according to Schweitzer, did not care enough to own a fortepiano even though he too was familiar with the instrument. Marvin's performances on the piano of our own day are nevertheless most persuasive. The recording is good. —I.K.

•
R. STRAUSS: *Parergon to the Sinfonia Domestica*, Op. 73; **LESCHETIZKY:** *Andante Finale de "Lucia di Lammermoor"* pour la main gauche, Op. 13; **SCHUBERT-LISZT:** *Du bist die Ruh* (arr. Paul Wittgenstein); **J. S. BACH:** *Sicilienne in G minor* (from *Sonata No. 2 in E flat for flute and harpsichord*, arr. Wittgenstein); **MOZART:** *Adagio* (from *Serenade in E flat*, K. 375, arr. Wittgenstein); **WAGNER-LISZT:** *Isolde's Liebestod* (from "*Tristan und Isolde*", arr. Wittgenstein); Paul Wittgenstein (piano); The Boston Records Orchestra conducted by Eric Simon (In R. Strauss). Boston B-412, \$4.98, or Stereo BST-1011, \$5.95.

⑤ **INASMUCH** as this is the only recording of *Parergon*, collectors of Richard Strauss will undoubtedly want to obtain this disc. The word in question is Greek for supplement or accessory; a subordinate work, in this case, to the *Sinfonia Domestica*. The one-movement concerto was commissioned by Paul Wittgenstein, the pianist who lost his right arm in the first World War, and Strauss complied in 1925 by basing his creation on snatches and themes of the earlier work (for legal reasons he could not infringe on the copyright

by quoting more than three measures). It is music of mixed contents: the style is typical of the composer only in certain places, and there are many passages where the piano seems to be struggling against the orchestra with totally alien thoughts. I hope I am not doing the work an injustice by terming it more a curiosity than anything else. It is, of course, historically interesting to hear this music played by the pianist, now seventy-three, for whom it was written. In both this and the various transcriptions for piano, left hand, which make up the contents of side two, Wittgenstein plays in a style which, whether because of technical difficulties or basic musical approach, is very much different from that to which we have become accustomed. Overpedaling is the rule (it must be said in fairness, however, that the pedal is the only means by which the pianist can sustain his tone if he plays with one hand alone), and notes are very often thumped out with neither great accuracy nor refinement. The transcriptions of the Bach and Mozart in particular are gross caricatures of this lovely music (which, incidentally, can sound well in transcription). The Wagner, possibly because it is more sustained and slow, is the most successful of these pieces, but on the whole I regret to say that the solo material gave me little listening pleasure. The Strauss, where Wittgenstein is supported by an orchestra capably directed by Eric Simon, is far more palatable. Fair sound. —I.K.

From Everest, the best 'Petrouchka' on records

STRAVINSKY: *Petrouchka*; London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Eugene Goossens. Everest LPBR-6033, or Stereo SDBR-3033, \$4.40.

⑥ **GOOSSENS'** concept is easily the best on records today, in terms of both subjective communication and organic definition. Other versions excel in certain portions (Kurtz in the fair scenes and Ansermet in the more intimate *Chez Petrouchka* and *Chez Le Maure*), but Goossens alone captures the excitement of the gay crowd and the comic, sardonic, and pathetic

aspects of the principal characters with equal ability. One could quibble with a few bars here and there (such as the over-slow trumpet solo of the Ballerina's entrance in *Chez Le Maure*), and one or two other places in the first and final tableaux where transitions are taken a shade too deliberately for ideal atmospheric projection, but these are very small matters indeed in what is otherwise a major accomplishment. Everest's reproduction is fabulous in stereo and at least superb in the mono version. —A.K.

STRAVINSKY: *Threni*; Bethany Beardslee (soprano); Beatrice Krebs (contralto); William Lewis (tenor); James Wainner (tenor); Mac Morgan (baritone); Robert Oliver (basso); Schola Cantorum (Hugh Ross, director) and Columbia Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Igor Stravinsky. Columbia ML-5383, \$4.98.

▲WHEN Stravinsky was commissioned by the North German Radio (Hamburg) to compose a work to be performed by that organization at the Venice Festival of 1958, he chose his text from the *Lamentations of Jeremiah*. The composer himself conducted the first performance. As

Robert Craft notes in his perceptive introduction to this recording, the *Threni* "are the longest and largest Stravinsky compositions since *The Rake's Progress*." As is his custom, Stravinsky has once again struck off into new paths. Long opposed to the Schönberg school and its twelve-note serial techniques, Stravinsky has played with its possibilities before this. But "*The Threni*", says Craft, "are composed more consistently and comprehensively than any other Stravinsky work before the *Movements for Piano and Orchestra* with a technique adapted from the twelve-note serial idea. *Agon* and the *Canticum Sacrum* were only

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partly 'serial'—which is part of the reason why the *Threni* appear to be more stylistically unified more 'of a piece' than either of these predecessors—whereas all the successions and groupings of notes in the *Threni* are derived from the orders of a single twelve-note series. . . ." The vocal and instrumental forces listed above suggest a work of grandiose proportions, but in texture and mood this music is light and restrained. The feature likely to stand out in the memory after a hearing is the device of the solo-voice canon. The chorus work is subdued, often to a whisper, and the orchestral part is conceived as a series of chamber music combinations. Never once does Stravinsky bring all his forces together. Needless to say, this is music calling for the most exacting musicianship on the part of all concerned. To find a group of vocal soloists capable of mastering its intervals with the accuracy and assurance of these artists would be difficult at any time or place—I suspect that a generation or two ago it would have been unthinkable. Fortunate indeed is the composer who can present his works in such performances! —P.L.M.

•
SULLIVAN: "*H. M. S. Pinafore*";

George Baker (Rt. Hon. Sir Joseph Porter, K. C. B.); John Cameron (Captain Corcoran); Richard Lewis (Ralph Rackstraw); Owen Brannigan (Dick Deadeye); James Milligan, John Cameron (Boatswain); James Milligan, Owen Brannigan (Boatswain's Mate); Elsie Morison (Josephine); Marjorie Thomas (Hebe); Monica Sinclair (Little Buttercup); Glyndebourne Festival Chorus and Pro Arte Orchestra, conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent. Angel Stereo set S-3589, four sides, \$11.90.

⑧LIKE others of the G & S operas that have been issued under these auspices, "*Pinafore*" is given an exceptionally polite performance. The singers chosen by Sir Malcolm Sargent are all well known and justly admired in oratorio, concert and opera; all are vocalists of the most tasteful and cultivated sort, and they are dedicated to the task of showing what really excellent and effectively vocal music Sir Arthur Sullivan could write. With one

exception these estimable artists seem less interested in the subtleties of Gilbert's humor. And so singing the music, without the interrupting dialogue, they give us a concert performance in the truest sense. The exception is the veteran George Baker, whose long career has included many performances with the D'Oyly Carte Company. The performance is enhanced by stereophonic sound; we can follow each voice in the ensembles as hardly ever in the theater and certainly never on older records. Such an effect as the chorus in which the ladies sing their theme and the sailors theirs works out splendidly, with the words in both groups clearly audible. Another wonderful spot is the *Admiral's Song* sung by the three sailors. On the debit side is the first chorus of ladies, supposedly offstage but very decidedly present. Miss Morison's voice seems to have given the microphones some trouble; she is, in fact, the one uneven singer in the cast. —P.L.M.

•
TCHAIKOVSKY: *Piano Concerto No. 1 in B flat minor*; Eugene Istomin (piano); Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML-5399, \$4.98.

Cliburn, Kondrashin..... RCA Victor LM-2252
▲COMPARISONS may be, and often are, odious, but when it comes to recent recordings of this thrice-familiar Concerto they are also inevitable, and especially so since RCA Victor issued Van Cliburn's recording. The two Eugenes, versus Cliburn and Kondrashin, are up against stiff competition. The pick-up orchestra Kondrashin had at his disposal is, of course, no match for the Philadelphia Orchestra, but the Russian conductor, like the pianist, brought to his interpretation a special affinity that is missing in the Istomin-Ormandy collaboration. In all other respects, Istomin plays with masterly control and, in bringing out and highlighting inner counter-melodies, adds a few notable touches of his own. There is this difference, however: Cliburn's rubatos always sound natural and are dedicated by the curve of the phrase and its concomitant expressivity, while Istomin's often seem imposed from

without and somewhat arbitrary. There is much to commend in his playing, too, for he combines brilliance with solid musicianship. But this concerto demands a certain dramatic flair to set it off properly, and it is lacking here. My guess is that Cliburn's recording will best bear repeated hearings. Columbia's engineers have captured a rich, vibrant piano sound here that blends remarkably well with the lush orchestral playing of the Philadelphians. —R.K.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Concerto No. 1 in B flat minor*; Leonard Pennario (piano); Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Erich Leinsdorf. Capitol Stereo SP-8417, \$5.98.

Cliburn.....Vic. LSC-2252
Giles.....Vic. LM-1969

⑤STRONG and fully competent, although Pennario's playing contains neither the poetry nor the enthusiasm of Cliburn's completely satisfying account. The opening measures, which should take off with wings, remain grounded. A high degree of sensitivity marks Leinsdorf's conducting, but energy is somehow

lacking. Capitol's recording is fairly distant, but the stereo is excellent and the piano stays centered. —D.H.M.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *1812 Overture, Op. 49*;
MENDELSSOHN: *Fingal's Cave Overture, Op. 26*; **LISZT:** *Mephisto Waltz*;
BRAHMS: *Tragic Overture, Op. 81*;
Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner. RCA Victor LM-2241, \$4.98, or Stereo LSC-2241, \$5.98.

⑤TO FOLLOW the bombastic *1812* with the lyrical and serene *Fingal's Cave Overture* is certainly carrying contrast to extreme. Reiner fares equally well with each piece, however. The *1812* places emphasis on bells rather than cannon, and here is the most ear-splitting carillon since the last Tsar was crowned. Reiner's *Mephisto* is a hair-raiser beside which Scherchen's recently released stereo performance is merely a wet rag, if you will pardon the mixed metaphors. The bite and ferocity of the cello in the opening pages is practically beyond belief. The *Tragic* is less successful. The orchestral

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tone lacks depth, and the elegiac element is missing. Reiner's drive would be more appropriate to Beethoven; the fortissimo chords are too short and punched. Victor's sound is glistening. —D.H.M.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 74 ("Pathétique")*; Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Vladimir Golschmann. Vanguard SRV-112, \$1.98.

▲**GOLSCHMANN'S** is an impassioned and highly volatile treatment, and it is enhanced by the excellent musicianship of the Vienna Philharmonic players. At \$1.98, it is the buy today. —A.K.

VIVALDI: *Il Cimento dell'Armonia e dell'Invenzione, Op. 8 (complete)*; Julian Olevsky (violin), Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Hermann Scherchen. Westminster set XWN-3315, six sides, \$14.94.

I Musici Epic SC-6029

▲**FINDING** the appropriate words for

this set is a difficult task. About the music itself, I Musici have done enough musically to make my verbal attempts superfluous. Discussing Scherchen is the problem. He is a rare individualist whose ideas on music are as often exasperatingly unconvincing as they are magnificently successful. For the most part, this *Cimento* is characterized by the former. The opening of the *Four Seasons* (which constitutes the first four of these twelve concerti) gives the soon-to-be-blasted impression that this is to be an interpretation not too radically unlike the others, but with an overly ample orchestra. The first shock comes with the succeeding slow movement, which is so slow and rigorously measured as to resemble a pallbearers' march. The next remarkable departure occurs in the two storm sections of *Summer*—no baroque storms these! I may be lost in excessive symbolism here, but I feel that it is Scherchen's aim in these sections to de-

A 'Swan Lake' to be avoided

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Swan Lake* (excerpts); Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Efrem Kurtz with Yehudi Menuhin, violin soloist. Capitol-EMI Stereo SG-7188, \$5.98.

§**THE** claim that this suite is drawn from the ill-fated 1877 (première) version of *Swan Lake* lent unusual interest to this release. The Act II *pas de deux* (Odette and the Prince) is indeed offered with the original *allegro* ending, and the numbers are played in the sequence of their original presentation—placing the music now utilized for the Prince's variation in Act 2, and that which today accompanies the Black Swan *pas de deux* and coda, back into the first act. So far so good. But the rather trite arrangement of this last *pas de deux* music (which is curtailed before the ending is reached, and an awkward transition inserted, segueing directly into the music now used as the male variation in this episode) cannot be authentic because the final number in this mishmash—the male variation in A major, 2/4 time—

is not by Tchaikovsky at all, but by Drigo, the conductor of the 1895 (and current) version. It is highly unlikely, moreover, that Drigo conceived this number as a violin solo, as played here, since it was to be used in place of Tchaikovsky's own male variation music which was deemed inappropriate for the desired leaps and *grand jetés*. The customary, and probably authentic, scoring, is for full orchestra. The performance itself gets off to a highly exciting start as played by the rich-sounding Philharmonia forces, and remains on a high level until Menuhin makes his appearance. The tasteless slurs, glissandi, nuances, and inflections inserted by the soloist and the wide vibrato with which he plays makes the already sentimental music so sickeningly sweet that it sounds like a parody of itself. Kurtz seems to have been affected by it all, because the orchestral numbers (the *Czardas* in particular) never again equal their initial impact. The reproduction is about all that can be recommended. —A.K.

scribe the horrors of modern warfare. Accepting my theory, this version should strike the listener as a resounding success. We are confronted with such howling cataclysms that the shelters from nuclear bombardment suggested by Civil Defense authorities are shown in their true light as being utterly useless. The conductor has made an eloquent plea for brotherly love. The tempi are so fast as to be dizzying and Olevsky deserves a medal for being able to negotiate his part with such amazing accuracy. The anonymous harpsichordist is worthy of like recognition. So it all goes, at one time or another, throughout these superb concerti. Some, such as No. 7, do not sound so off-beat, just rather uninteresting as compared to I Musici's renditions, which are afflicted by none of Scherchen's mad tempi, maddening ritardandi, tiring fermate, *ad inf.* This is the work of a thinking conductor and he has thought up a monster.

—H.G.

WEISGALL: "The Tenor"; Richard Cassilly (Gerardo); Richard Cross (Maurice); Doris Young (Helen); Dorothy Coulter (Young Girl); Chester Ludgin (Valet); John Kuhn (Bellboy); Vienna State Opera Orchestra, conducted by Herbert Grossmann. Westminster set OPW-1206, four sides, \$9.96.

▲THE libretto of Hugo Weisgall's one-act is taken from Wedekind's *Der Kammersänger*, and it is the joint work of Karl Shapiro and Ernst Ler. It is concerned with the conflict between the professional and emotional lives of a popular and vain heroic tenor. The opera was first produced in February, 1952, just a few months before the same composer's monodrama *The Stronger* (Columbia ML 5106). The accompanying leaflet contains an accolade by no less a critic of opera than Joseph Kerman. For my own part I cannot help wondering about the popular response to such a work in recording, where whatever effectiveness the staging may have must be left to the imagination. Perhaps here the spotlight is thrown too strongly on the voices. They sing in a rather stilted *purlando*, with characteristic

pauses between questions and answers, everything drawn quite conspicuously beyond the limits of natural speech. There is a good deal of cleverness in the orchestral background—more, I suspect, than one gets from a hearing or two. The most lyrical writing in the score is in the part of Helen, the mistress of Gerardo, who has left her husband only to be let down by the great tenor. Happily Doris Young, who sings the part, has a very handsome voice and the ability to make it telling in this music. The others are fully adequate, but they leave you with no very strong impression. And I am afraid the last remark may be applied also to the score.

—P.L.M.



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Salvaging guilt from the 'Golden Age'

By PHILIP L. MILLER

THE COLLECTOR of 78s faces several special problems. The first is posed by the seemingly endless variety of artists and/or repertory dating from the first half of our century. For the new collector this may be overwhelming. Where to start? Fortunately we don't all like the same music or respond to the same interpreters; how, then, is one to learn which path to follow? And if one confines oneself to one school, one language, one type of music, even one famous singer, which of us has room in a modern dwelling to contain all that interests him? In the unlikely case that he can find the records he wants—in good clean copies—can he afford the prices? And then, when he has gotten them home, will his turntable adjust to the wide speed variations—sometimes ten or more revolutions per minute on either side of the so-called standard 78?

No true collector would ever admit that a modern LP dubbing could possibly take the place of a good original. True, a skillful engineer can remove a good deal of the surface noise which the hi-fi enthusiast finds so annoying, but more often than not something else goes along with this, it may be the very something that gives "presence" and vitality to the old recording. Of course anyone can point to shining exceptions, but to a large extent the collector is right. But he must also have reproducing equipment designed to bring out the best and suppress extraneous noises. Some insist that acoustic records can only properly be played on acoustic machines: certainly this is an extreme (and rare) view, yet it is not without foundation.

The best answer to most of these problems, however, is still the "historical re-issue." By this means the novice can look in all directions before he decides

which way he is going; he can save storage space at a rate of up to twenty to one; he can save himself fabulous amounts of money; and he can with no qualms of glutton's conscience wear his records out with playing. The seasoned collector, for his part, may be content by this means to call back from time to time memories of ail but his prime favorite discs, thus clearing the house for new experiences.

Top Artists Platters (soon to be more becomingly called Top Artists Production, I am told) is the full name of a new-comer in the field, more conveniently referred to as TAP. In two respects, at least, the label is outstanding: the amount of music crowded onto each disc side is truly amazing, and the price of \$3.98 is incredibly low. Other companies have given us such bargains as *Ten Tenors*; *Ten Arias*: TAP is content with nothing less than twenty! As I remarked above, there is a wide variety in collectors' tastes, and hardly any listener could be expected to sit spellbound while one of these records is played from beginning to end. But who reads a poetry anthology straight through? And just as there is always the favorite poem not included, so something will always be missing even in such generous samplers as these. But with the TAP anthologies already released the most settled of all collectors may find his horizons expanding.

In considering such a group of collections the reviewer is at a loss. He knows full well that his readers want full contents listings as well as extended critical comment. Obviously there is room for neither. He can only touch on the high spots and perhaps deplore the low.

Let us begin with the solo recitals, then proceed to the catch-alls. And how better

to do this impartially than to take our recitalists in alphabetical order? Mattia Battistini, "*La Gloria d'Italia*", is not one to be left out of a series of this kind. He was not only a great *bel canto* baritone, but a prolific and successful recording artist. And his records were not merely good: they sold. Consequently only some of them are rare today. I am grateful to TAP for giving us not the usual operatic arias but a whole program of songs. These may not be masterpieces, but they are effective vehicles for Battistini's kind of singing, and a few—Tosti's *Ideale*, Gounod's *Le Soir*—are not without distinction in their own rights. Two other Tosti songs—*Mon bras pressait* and *Ancora*—occasion some outstanding vocalism. A curio is the final song, allegedly by Beethoven, called *Delizia*. If it has a familiar sound this may be because it is better known as a piano piece by Schubert. To be sure this *Trauer-Walzer* has been frequently credited to Beethoven (T-302).

The first records made by Caruso were Pathé cylinders, probably dating from

1901. Two years later he made his Zonophones and G & Ts, after which he worked exclusively with Victor in America. TAP offers no less than twenty titles from those pre-American lists. The historic and musical interest of these souvenirs of the young lyric tenor need hardly be emphasized here. But the TAP disc would be more valuable had the field not already been well enough covered by Rococo and Eterna—for quality of reproduced sound the Eterna disc is the most satisfying. And TAP has not corrected the pitch in at least two arias (T-307).

Fedor Chaliapin and Titta Rufo share a disc. The great Russian is heard not in the music of his homeland, but in a selection of French and Italian arias, some sung in Russian. Perhaps his best showing is made in the big "*Lucrezia Borgia*" aria, in Italian, though I also like the "*Faust*" scene with Maria Michailowa's lovely soprano. The *Invocation* from "*Faust*" is here masquerading (on the label) as a part of the first-act duet. Chaliapin was an erratic singer, at his best a master even

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in this more classic repertory, but to show him without any Russian selections is to show only a part. Ruffo, on the other hand, in a selection of early recordings of arias from French and Italian operas, piano accompanied and all sung in Italian, is shown pretty well in the round. His was a huge and vital voice, a powerful if not always subtle artistry (T-309).

Richard Tauber was something else again. A lyric tenor of delightful tone and polished vocalism, he excelled, in his early days, especially in Mozart. Later, after he had enjoyed some of his greatest successes in operettas, he carried some of the resulting mannerisms into his singing of arias and lieder. There is first-rate Tauber presented in his TAP recital, and there are songs with transposed vocal lines, overloaded accompaniments and overblown choral backgrounds, some surprisingly good singing in French—the *Aubade* from "*Le Roi d'Ys*"—lots of the famous Tauber *mezza voce* and some perfectly turned Viennese numbers. I liked the airs from "*Martha*", "*The Jewels of the Madonna*", and "*Fra Diavolo*" (T-313).

But how approach the *Twenty Coloratura Sopranos* (T-310)? There are several authentic masterpieces—Frieda Hempel's little lark with the Mozart-Adam variations, Maria Ivogün's Queen of the Night, Melba's early *Ah, fors' è lui* (a triumph over surface noise), Lilli Lehmann's *Sempre libera* (though recorded a half-tone high). A number of others suffer from incorrect pitch, but from Patti to Ritter-Ciampi these are all accomplished artists.

Twenty Great Sopranos (T-306) does not exclude the coloraturas, for here is Hempel again, singing her dazzling Queen of the Night, Tetrazzini with *Bel raggio*, Melba with the "*Lucia*" Mad Scene, Barrientos with *Ah, non giunge* and Nordica with her amazing *tour de force* in Hungarian from Erkel's "*Hunyadi Laszlo*". Garden, Ponselle, Raisa, Destinn, Calvé, Arnoldson, Jeritza, Fremstad, Lotte and Lilli Lehmann all are here, but not all accurately pitched.

The *Twenty Contraltos* (T-311) include, oddly enough, Calvé and Fremstad. The latter, to be sure, began in the lower range, and her aria is *O don fatale*, which she

sings more easily and more dramatically than most. From older generations the fabled Marianne Brandt, Guerrina Fabbri, and Eugenia Mantelli are happily represented, and Gerville-Réache, Schumann-Heink, Marie Delna, Kirkby Lunn, and Bressler-Gianoli are heard to advantage. But the early Marian Anderson's "*Jeanne d'Arc*" aria adds little to her stature, and certainly Dame Clara Butt sang other music better than Handel's. And a real injustice is done to Matzenauer by a shrill scene from "*Lohengrin*".

Twenty Tenors (T-303) begins with the early Caruso, a repeat from his TAP recital. Tamagno is here with a *Di quella pira* which is not the published one, and there is virile, thrilling singing from Pertile, O'Sullivan, Tauber, Vignas, Zenatello, Marconi, Bassi, and others. I would have chosen a different Clément for all the verve of this "*Dame Blanche*" workout, and a more genuinely Italian selection for de Lucia. Again there are some uncorrected pitches.

Twenty Great Baritones (T-304) brings us two famous early records with applause and encores, Maurel's *Quand' ero paggio* and d'Andrade's *Finch' han dal vino*. There is some old-fashioned embroidered but by no means ineffective Mozart by Campanari (a tone low), some fine Rossini by Renaud. Van Rooy, Kaschmann, Giraldoni, Ancona, Lassale, Sammarco—these are a few of the famous names on the labels.

Lastly the *Twenty Basses* (T-312) with the polish and facility of a Plançon, the magnificent sonority and depth of a Mardones and an Arimondi, the superb big tone of a Delmas and a Belhomme, the artistry of a Journet, the vivid personal approach of a Chaliapin, repeating the "*Lakmè*" aria from his recital. The more modern Baccaloni gives us an interesting number—the *Calunnia* aria not from Rossini's "*Barber*" but from Paisiello's. Perhaps too many of these bass arias are sung in translations—by such artists as de Angelis, Bender, Knüpfer, and Blass—and again we have the problem of incorrect pitches. But there is a great deal of gold in this as well as the other TAP releases.

Stereodisc Miscellany

The Cadet Chapel Choir, West Point—

Alma Mater (Kuecken); *Sing Praises* (Glarum); *God is my strong salvation* (Mendelssohn); *With a voice of singing* (Shaw); *God be in my head* (Davies); *Hymn of Brotherhood* (Old Dutch); *Rejoice in the Lord alway* (Lang); *Prayer* (Beethoven); *Wake thou* (Bach); *Last Words of David* (Thompson); *Turn back, o man* (Holst); *Glory now to Thee* (Bach); *Behold now praise the Lord* (Titcomb); Cadet Chapel Choir, West Point, conducted by John A. Davis. Stereo-Vox VX-425,590, \$4.98.

⑤THE cadets who provide the music for the services and ceremonies in the West Point Chapel do so voluntarily. To judge by this selection their repertory is chosen with imagination, for along with some familiar staples they present several worth-while and less familiar selections. The Randall Thompson and Titcomb works are of special interest, and Holst's *Turn back, o man*, while no novelty in the choir loft, deserves to be more widely known. Not the least of the choir's virtues is its diction—the texts come through clearly throughout the program. Plenty of fine stereo effects. —P.L.M.

•
The Hi-Fi Deutscheisters; Deutscheister Band conducted by Julius Herrmann. Westminster Stereo WST-15030, \$5.98.

⑤THIS recording overflows with the Viennese spirit which, even in band playing, is all relaxation and elegance. The music itself is mostly arrangements of rather schmaltzy waltzes and popular melodies—quite a contrast to the whiz-band American repertory and style of performance. I personally find this soft-hearted approach rather at odds with good band sound; things seem just a bit labored and ill co-ordinated. However, I can't point an accusing finger at these obviously competent players; it must be purely a psychological effect. Excellent stereo sound. —P.C.P.

The Hoffnung Interplanetary Music Festival, presented at the Royal Festival Hall, London, November 21-22, 1958

—**BAINES:** *Festival Overture*; **IIORO-VITZ:** *Metamorphosis on a Bed-time Theme*; **POSTON:** *Sugar Plums*; **SEIBER:** *The Famous Tay Whale*; **CHAGRIN:** *Concerto for Conductor and Orchestra*; **SEARLE:** *Punkt Contrapunkt*; **ARNOLD:** *The United Nations*; **FRICKER:** *Waltz for Restricted Orchestra*; **REIZENSTEIN:** *Let's Fake an Opera*; April Cantelo, Gloria Lane, Sheila Rex (sopranos), Edith Coates (contralto), John Dobson, Edgar Evans, Duncan Robertson (tenors), Peter Glossop, Otakar Kraus (baritones), Ian Wallace (bass-baritone), Owen Brannigan (bass), Edith Evans (speaker), Dolmetsch Ensemble, Band of the Royal Military School of Music, Hoffnung Festival Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Norman Del Mar and others. Angel 35800, \$4.98, or Stereo S-35800, \$5.98.

⑤LIKE most evenings of musical parody recorded live (Victor Borge, Anna Russell, etc.), the Hoffnung clambakes are so replete with sight gags that the mere listener must often endure a mountain of inexplicable laughter and applause for a molehill of auditory fun. This is a pity, because "serious" music is as needful of healthy self-deflation, to keep things in perspective, as most civilized institutions. And where is the purely musicological fun today equal to Hely-Hutchinson's Handelian *Old Mother Hubbard* (which I haven't heard for too long)? I'd hate to think that in music too, as Jules Feiffer remarked of our modern politicians, satire is really dead because the VIP's are so heedlessly self-satirizing that no one can top them even by trying. The Hoffnugites are less smoothly professional than Russell or Borge, but more ambitious, especially in their liberal commissioning of British composers. On this recording, the absence of dividing bands is all in their

favor, obstructing the listener from picking out his favorites for his friends, to be sure, but also minimizing the duds by integrating it all into a rapidly flowing panorama. There's always another upbeat ready.

The targets are widely scattered, though Gerard Hoffnung's own special daemon, as shown in his many cartoons published by Mills, is an incredulous fascination with the symphony orchestra comparable to Thurber's with the war of the sexes. (There will be no more cartoons, alas, owing to Hoffnung's shocking and untimely death last September at the age of 34, but I for one hope that the festival idea will be continued.) Racine Fricker's *Waltz for Restricted Orchestra* is offered as an antidote for Mantovani-Stokowski lushness, while Elizabeth Poston's *Sugar Plums* reduces some "great moments from Tchaikovsky" to a baroque ensemble with an unclassifiable battery of percussion. Malcolm Arnold's *United Nations* is perhaps a sly dig at British patriotic sentimentality; a confused babel of "chauvinistic airs and marches" never fazes an Elgarian "*Nobilmente*" (original, and very good), which proceeds unperturbed into everlasting silence. Francis Chagrin's *Concerto for Conductor and Orchestra*, while giving great glee to those present, is sonically nowhere, and Matyas Seiber's *Famous Tay Whale*, gamely narrated by Dame Edith Evans, somewhere below that. The meatier *Metamorphosis on a Bed-time Theme* lampoons the singing-commercial abomination in the idioms of several dramatic composers. Its best variation is in Schönbergian *Sprechgesang* (*Pierrot Lunaire* style, which is about as interplanetary as things ever get), and this prepares for a later concerted assault on twelve-tone music, and especially its heavy Teutonic analysts, through John Amis' and Humphrey Searle's *Punkt Contrapunkt*, in which Hoffnung himself modestly takes an anonymous part. His German professor is almost as good as Sid Caesar's.

But the final and longest (20') number will determine whether this record is for you. Franz Reizenstein's *Concerto to End All Concertos* was, predictably, the real hit of the first Hoffnung record (Angel

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35500). That memorable battle between a conductor purposefully performing the Tchaikovsky and a lady soloist grimly determined to play the Grieg instead managed to make, in its stupefying course, some sardonic and frequently enlightening comments on most of the pianistic war-horses. Now his *Let's Fake an Opera* does the same for the standbys of the Paris-Rome-Bayreuth axis, and here the listener has the decided benefit of William Mann's complete libretto. It sounds much better than it reads, and whatever transpired onstage (I gather that plenty did), the fun here is definitely, for the connoisseur, in the music, with some surprising subtleties both lingual and harmonic, not necessarily evident at first hearing. The stereo sound is so good it whets the appetite for the full operas just being served in that medium, including three—"Carmen", "Aida", and "Die Meistersinger"—which, in his grand, grand finale, the ingenious Reizenstein keeps spinning in the air together for some time.

French Recitalists

Recital: "Otello"—*Air du Saule; Ave Maria* (Verdi); "Faust"—*Il était un Roi de Thulé; Air des Bijoux* (Gounod); "Manon"—*Je suis encore tout étourdie; Adieu notre petite table* (Massenet); "Borème"—*On m'appelle Mimi; Madama Butterfly*—*Sur la mer calmée* (Puccini); "Mireille"—*Mon cœur ne peut changer; A toi mon âme, je suis la femme* (Gounod); "Nozze di Figaro"—*Air de Chérubin; Air de Suzanne* (Mozart); Géori Boué (soprano) with orchestra conducted by Gustave Clötz. Odéon XOC-122, \$5.95.

▲THIS recital should cause some revised opinions of Mme. Géori Boué. Like most sopranos of the French school, the lady's voice has a tendency to edginess, and this tendency has quite naturally increased with the passing years. My own first impression of her singing was made by the Beecham "Faust", released about a decade ago. I would venture the opinion (I have no documentation to offer) that she was at that time already past her high prime, though obviously she was an artist of style. I do not know when the originals of these arias were made, but it seems to say they are considerably earlier than the "Faust". Clearly she is in full possession of her powers here. The two "Otello" pieces are meltingly sung in French—her treatment of the repeated word *Saule* is exquisite. The two from "Faust" are also fine, and the *Adieu* from "Manon" is a real high spot. Such quiet expressiveness, such reserved intensity, are rare indeed. There is vocal acting in the Puccini numbers; of the "Mireille" I like the first the better, which is partially, at least, Gounod's fault. A final surprise comes with the French *Deh vien, non tardar*, a delightfully lyrical performance. —P.L.M.

●
PUCCINI: "La Bohème"—*Que cette main est froide; On m'appelle Mimi; Adieux de Mimi; Quatuor; Ah! Mimi s'en est allée; Ils sont partis; BIZET: "Carmen"—L'amour est enfant de bohème; Près des remparts de Séville; Les tringles des sistres tintaient; Air du Toréador; La fleur que tu m'avais jetée; Air des Cartes; Ninon Vallin* (soprano); Miguel Villabella (tenor); Madeleine Sibille (soprano); André Baugé (baritone) with orchestra. Pathé DTX-265, \$5.95.

▲IN subject "La Bohème" is a French opera, and its music does not sound badly sung in that language. On these terms this selection of "Les plus belles pages" is welcome. Vallin is a good Mimi, vocally rich and temperamentally credible. Her associates fill the bill satisfactorily. But paradoxically "Carmen", though a real French opera, is another matter. Vocally the soprano never sounded better; her voice is velvety and smooth and there is little one could take exception to in her singing. The *Card Scene* (with which the performance ends all too abruptly) sounds particularly well. But I am afraid, as much as I love her, Ninon Vallin simply is not Carmen. Villabella is in good form, but for some reason he seems in a hurry to get through the *Flower Song*. This is hard to understand, for there was always plenty of room for it on a 12-inch disc. Baugé is well cast as the Toreador. —P.L.M.

FOREIGN MARKET

BOIELDIEU: "La Dame Blanche"—*Ah! quel plaisir d'être soldat; Quand la paix; Viens, gentille dame; Déjà la nuit plus sombre; ROSSINI: "Barbiere di Siviglia"—Des rayons de l'aurore; Silence a sa fenêtre; LALO: "Le Roi d'Ys"—La salut nous est promis; Vainement, ma bien aimée; OFFENBACH: "Les Contes d'Hoffmann"—O Dieux, de quelle ivresse; DELIBES: "Lakmé"—Fantaisie aux divins mensonges; MASSENET: "Violette et le comte de Montfort"; MESSAGER: "La Basoche"—Quand tu connaîtras Colette; A ton amour simple et sincère; "Fortunio"—Je suis très tendre; Si vous croyez que je vais dire; MASSENET: "Le Jongleur de Notre Dame"—Il fait beau voir ces hommes d'armes; Mon beau seigneur, je reste sage; Miguel Villabella (tenor). Odéon ODX-136, \$5.95.*

▲VILLABELLA was a leading French tenor (though actually Spanish by birth) between the two wars. The voice was light, flexible, and high—his French version of *Ecco ridente* in this program takes him up to a high E flat. The writer of the introductory notes deplores the fact that the singer sometimes overstepped himself in his operatic roles, but then assures us the present selection represents Villabella at his best. The group of selections from "La Dame Blanche" offers a measure of his versatility, from the tongue-twisting *Ah! quel plaisir* to the dreamy *Viens, gentille dame*. The light music, from operettas of Messager, is especially attractive in his performance; there is considerable dash in his singing as well as admirably smooth vocalism. —P.L.M.

●
ROSSINI: "Barbiere di Siviglia"—*Air de la Calomnie; DELIBES: "Lakmé"—Stances; GOUNOD: "Philémon et Baucis"—Que les songes heureux; Au bruit des lourds marteaux; OFFENBACH: "Contes d'Hoffmann"—Air de Coppélius: J'ai des yeux. . . Scintille diamant; MASSENET: "Manon"—Epoque quelque brave fille; MUSSORGSKY: "Boris Godunov"—J'ai le pouvoir suprême; Scène du Carillon: Je souffre, je succombe; GOUNOD: "Faust"—Le veau d'or; Sérénade; MASSENET: "Don Quichotte"—C'est vers ton amour; Je suis le chevalier errant; GOUNOD: "Mireille"—Si les filles d'Arles sont reines; André Pernet (basso) with orchestra. Odéon ODX-135, \$5.95.*

▲PERNET has long been familiar to me as The Father in the old Columbia set of "Louise". I was surprised to read in the notes accompanying this program that he made his debut in 1928, for I had thought of him as an old timer. His singing belongs definitely to the older school. The voice itself is a superb instrument, rich and deep, but capable of

ringing high tones when occasion demands. He does a superb piece of characterization in the "Barber" piece, though it may sound a bit strange in French. The "Lakmé" and "Hoffmann" numbers show him to great advantage in standard French repertoire. In "Boris" and "Don Quichotte" he challenges comparison with Chaliapin, and it is to his great credit that he never imitates his great predecessor. His is, of course, the purer vocalism, the greater musical control. The arias from "Faust" and "Mireille" are beyond praise, but the best of all, to my taste, is the little slumber song from "Philémon et Baucis", so full of melting tenderness. The Vulcan Song, which can be dull, is here saved by good gruff humor. When Gounod's music is sung in this way we can easily understand why our grandfathers could never get enough of it. —P.L.M.

Richard Tauber Chante: "Frasquita"—Serenade; "Frederica"—O maiden, my maiden; "Paganini"—Girls were made to love and kiss; "Die lustige Witwe"—Waltz (Lehar); Vienna City of My Dreams (Sieczynski); "Das Land des Lachens"—You are my heart's delight; "Frederica"—Sah ein Knab' ein röseln stehn; "Der Zarewitsch"—Wolgalied (Lehar); Serenade (Schubert); Richard Tauber (tenor) with orchestra. Odéon OD-1022, ten-inch, \$4.98.

▲TAUBER'S later years were spent in England; in a sense he began a second career on settling in London in 1938. What made the difference was that he began to sing his familiar Viennese repertory in English. To make this a truly international record, it has been planned and issued in France, but the songs represent the two Taubers, him of Vienna and him of London. Through it all, in both tongues, the rich, insinuating voice sounds its best; the singer's power to get to the heart of such matters as these was not to be lessened by climate or climate. The transfer of the recordings to LP is good if not uniformly successful. In a few places there is a loss of clarity, but certainly not enough to destroy the pleasure the singing can give. —P.L.M.

WAGNER: "Tannhauser"—Romance a l'étoile; En contemplant cette assemblée immense; "Der fliegende Holländer"—L'heure a sonné; **REYER:** "Sigurd"—Et toi, Fréa, déesse de l'amour!; **CHAUSSON:** "Le Roi Arthur"—Prophétie de Merlin; **DONIZETTI:** "La Favorite"—Pour tant d'amour; Vieux, Léonore; **ROSSINI:** "Guillaume Tell"—Sois immobile; **GOUNOD:** "Faust"—Avant de quitter ces lieux; Mort de Valentin; **MAGNARD:** "Guercoeur"—Le Pardon de Guercoeur; Arthur Endreze (baritone) with orchestra. Pathé PCX-5006, \$5.95.

▲"FINALLY and above all we applauded a perfect interpretation and one worthy of the greatest theatres of Europe. What a discovery this young baritone Endreze, said to be American and a pupil of Jean de Reszke! He rises so high that one would be tempted to classify him among the dramatic tenors if he did not descend so low. The timbre is magnificent and the power really formidable. Let us hope that M. Rouché will be able to secure this magnificent artist permanently and not let him be

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carried off to America. . ." So wrote Henri Prunières in 1931, concluding his review of Guy-Ropartz' revival of Albéric Magnard's "Guercoeur" at the Paris Opéra. When first produced in 1904 this opera had carried away the young Prunières on the tide of Wagnerism, but now he found it undramatic, amateurish, though admirably orchestrated, its poem incredibly naive. Having been heard again, "Guercoeur" went back to its long sleep, but the young baritone remained in Paris, returning to America only as a teacher after the war. He had come to France in 1918 on the advice of Walter Damrosch and made his operatic debut at Nice in 1925. Actually he had sung several seasons at the Opéra before his sensation in "Guercoeur". He now found himself much sought after, and he created important roles in operas by such composers as Honegger, Ibert, Sauguet, and Milhaud. There are several refreshing moments of novelty in this assemblage of his recordings (all, I believe, made in the thirties) with especially notable singing in the scene from Chausson's "Le Roi Arthur". Endreze reminds me, somehow, of Maurice Renaud; he knows how to act with his voice. Even the Wagner selections do not sound too strange in French, and his excursions into Donizetti and Rossini (as it happens, in these operas French is the original language) are admirably stylish. The two selections from "Faust" (the opera of his Paris debut) should be studied by contemporary Valentins. The reproduction of these transfers is marred by some noisy surfaces, but, as the sleeve note claims, it is "satisfaisante, sinon parfaite." —P.L.M.

Folk Music

By HENRIETTA YURCHENCO

Germaine Montero—Canciones de España; with Salvador Bacarisse and his orchestra. Vanguard VRS-9050, \$4.98.

▲THIS one is a reissue of an excellent album. Miss Montero is a fine chanteuse with a style that goes to the heart of Spanish song. She avoids all the vulgarities of the female Spanish night club voice—meaning raucous posturing and crude quasi-masculinity. Her Spanish is beautiful. Orchestral arrangements vie in subtlety and understanding with those of Canteloube's in the "Songs of the Auvergne". The album contains material from Andalusia, Castile, Asturias and Galicia, to mention a few. A few guitar selections by Roman El Granaino round out the program.

•
España Cañi; Dancing Pasodobles. Terig Tucci and his Orchestra. Victor LPM-1922, \$3.98.

▲DEVOTEES of bull fight music will recognize some of these tunes, the same ones that begin the elegant pageantry in the ring. Yet the *pasodoble* is a popular ballroom dance from Spain. Its precise footwork is simple—a walk in which the dancers hold themselves with the dignity and stance reminiscent of the bull fighter. As the notes on the jacket suggest, the gentleman (if he's the imaginative type) may think of himself as the *torero* with the lady as the cape he maneuvers. Be that as it may, it's a marvelously graceful dance. Strange it has no vogue here. Fine orchestra, excellent performance.

•
Songs and Dances from Spain; Vol. 11—Leon and Extremadura. Recorded in the Field and Edited by Alan Lomax. Westminster WF-12023, \$4.98.

▲THE provinces of Leon and Extremadura in old Castile preserve a lively folk music. Ancient ballads, wedding songs, and shepherd tunes lead the rest. This eleventh volume of Westminster's series on Spanish folk music contains many good examples sung for the most part by good rural singers. The shepherd tunes, however, are admirably played by a leading Spanish musicologist, Manuel García Matos. One objection—the work

songs on this record are not work songs, or certainly they are not, like American Negro songs, real aids to work. They may be songs *about* work (although most of them are about love). They are sung on any pretext. The musical form is exactly that of the *ronda* songs, the dance and wedding tunes, with no special rhythm or accent to distinguish them. Mr. Lomax' desire to bring the Spanish plains into your living room is laudable, but a *ronda* performed by a farmer, even with the sound of his plough digging into the dry earth, doesn't make it a work song. Worth adding, though, to any comprehensive collection of Spanish folk music. Good jacket notes.

•
Tahiti: The Surfers. HiFirecord R-417, \$4.95.

▲TAHITIAN music from Broadway, N. Y. Night club performers who do equally well with Latin American, Hawaiian, popular Tahitian tunes and some handsomely done up primitive rhythms in arrangements that are smart and slick in the modern manner. This album should appeal to the bored teen-ager wearied of the nervous jitteriness of rock and roll. Good for dancing from old fashioned cheek-to-cheek to swaying, sensuous Hawaiian undulations. Electric guitar, ukulele, vibes, and percussion sound brilliant on this especially hi-fi recording.

•
The Troubadours at the Viennese Lantern; featuring Ernest Schoen and Martha Bensen. Kapp KL-1145, \$3.98.

▲THIS orchestra holds forth at a midtown Manhattan spot. All your favorite waltzes are on this one. Most of it is so bright and brittle that the *Gemlichkeit* and yearning sentimentality associated with Viennah arduously make the selves felt. However, *I Kiss Your Hand, Madame*, is done so well that it waltzed your reviewer right back to—no, you're wrong! Not Vienna but a German beer garden in Rome. Wonder how the strudel is there?

•
Everybody Dance! Polish Dance Music (Polkas, Waltzes, Obereks); Clare Witkowski and his Orchestra. Kapp KL-1134, \$3.98.

▲AS the notes say, here is "uninhibited, happy music designed to bewitch your feet and set them tapping." Forty-five minutes of happiness, if you can keep dancing. The amount of joy is considerably reduced if you stop to listen. But

Henrietta Yurchenco is the chief folk music critic. Paul Kresh and Herbert Haufrecht are her associate reviewers.

enough sniping; the record by this excellent group from Detroit was meant for dancing. So, if one Saturday night you tire of do-si-do try these energetic waltzes, polkas and obereks. (Too bad these records never give instructions as to how to do the dance. Everybody would appreciate it.)

• **Oranin Zabar Israeli Troupe; *Around the Campfire*.** Elektra 166, \$4.98.

▲ANOTHER record from this expert and entertaining group. Guela Gill's voice, unfortunately, is still unyieldingly hard-sounding. Dov Seltzer's arrangements are unusually fancy on this disc. Nothing really new, but all of it should please faithful fans.

• **Donkey Debka! *Young Israel Sings*.** Ron and Nama. Elektra 173, \$4.98.

▲IN case you're wondering what the title means—Donkey Dance! These two young people are sophisticated entertainers. Here is the face of show business as it looks before Near Eastern footlights. All so gay, *chic*, fun, thin as mountain air—but expert of its genre.

• **Luis Alberto del Parana and his *Trio los Paraguayos*.** Epic LN-3594, \$3.98.

▲PARAGUAY'S contribution to Tin Pan Alley. The claims made in the notes for "authenticity" (hateful word!) and "genuine folkmusic" are supposed to differentiate the Paraguayan Tin Pan Alley from ours. In essence they are both the same! Moreover, they even swap vulgarities. Except for a few native dances, such as *Guarani F.B.C.* and *Chiquita Lina*, this type of sentimental song is found everywhere in Latin America and demonstrates national character only in slight and unimportant details. The group consists of two guitars and a wooden native harp.

• **Son of Dalliance.** Ed McCurdy. Elektra 170, \$4.98.

▲SEX on LP. McCurdy lends a lusty baritone to a collection of lusty ballads. The music ranges from corn-fed tunes to art songs. This record is designed for people strictly interested in the lyrics, not the music. In case you can't get all the words from the record, the accompanying booklet prints every lecherous one of them.

• **Polka and Waltz Time in Bohemia.** Ernst Mosch and his Bohemian Band. Telefunken TP-2511, \$1.98.

▲THIS brass band playing beer garden music may be just the thing for drinking beer all alone, but might intrude if there were two of you.

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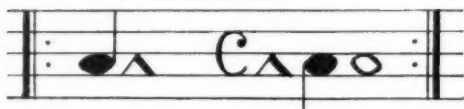
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14



A column for collectors
By STEVEN SMOLIAN

THERE is no artistically valid reason for at least half the records listed in the current Schwann catalogue. The only way these discs become commercially feasible is through the "Hollywood star" promotion of the personality involved. Necessary as such releases may be to the financial well-being of the record company's stockholders, this situation results in a great quantity of chaff through which the serious collector is forced to sift for the occasional wheat: unless sound is the primary consideration, a careful culling of the monthly releases seldom discloses more than a few items worth adding to one's library.

The target toward which most new releases are aimed, presumably, is the beginning collector. He, in his innocence and/or insecurity, falls prey to the most false of standards—that of the "latest recording". Within, say, a two-year period, either he will have replaced the records bought within the first six months

with even newer versions or, if his musical tastes mature, his initial purchases will be neglected in favor of performances of higher attainment. With some luck this later group may include a few discs from the original lot.

The state of competition in the recording industry at present limits the possible combinations of artists, orchestras, accompanists, etc., through contracts, and understandably (however unfortunately) the interchange of major names among studios is hardly standard practice. Thus, each company is forced to rely upon its own stable of musicians as personnel for recording sessions.

Although a particular artistic personality may be especially well suited to a particular idiom and style, he is all too infrequently invited to perform what he can do best. Rather, the thinking seems to be: We need a recording of the Beethoven Ninth in stereo. Who is the biggest name we have under contract? Ah, yes, "X". Good, he'll do it. And so "X", a Frenchman whose affinity is to Berlioz and Roussel, and who is conductor of the one orchestra in the American "big five" that this company has under contract, records the Beethoven Ninth. One month later a complete set of the Beethoven Symphonies is released by a competitor in performances led by a specialist in this music. The latter recording has been an open secret in the industry for over a year. Thus, the first performance (Munch) goes into the limbo of Schwann, whereas the second (Walter) awaits obsolescence by some yet-to-be-released version which will be not only idiomatic but also forceful, as Walter's is not, in my opinion. In the case of Munch there is the additional irony that his effort might have been very well expended on a Beethoven Seventh, which is for me the only one of the nine that he conducts successfully (hear his early

When you can't find some remembered review from a back issue of *The American Record Guide*, consult

The Index of Record Reviews

Compiled by KURTZ MYERS

in the quarterly journal



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LM-1034), whereas this work was recently entrusted to Reiner and the Chicago in another release that seems to me only a partial success. The large percentage of failures among the monthly releases often can be attributed directly to the performer's unfamiliarity with or temperamental unsuitability to a given work.

To be allowed to record a composition of which he is fond, the conductor may have to record something "commercial". One of the more famous of these deals is said to have occurred in the thirties between Stokowski and RCA Victor. Stokowski wanted to do Schönberg's "*Gurrelieder*", and Victor agreed, provided he also do a *Stars and Stripes Forever*, I think it was. Victor knew that sales of the Sousa would cover the cost of the gigantic Schönberg set (28 sides).

But it is in the vocal field, where singing *per se* may be on a merely vocal rather than musical level, where reputation, carefully nurtured and maintained, most often assumes primacy over performance. The inability of not only the

general public but also the vast majority of critics to discern a poor performance by a famous singer or to uncover a fine, unknown artist has always seemed to me to reveal a fear of chastisement in the former instance and a fear of "sticking your neck out" in the latter.

Reading back over what I have said above, I find that I seem to have been talking all around what I really set out to say—that a record is a "record", hence permanent, and not a means of trying out new interpretations, new roles, new ideas, but rather an opportunity to furnish the public a catalogue of sufficient merit to insure that even a disc chosen at random will meet minimum artistic standards.

For example, and with due apology for pre-judgment, what are we to expect from the new De los Angeles-Beecham "*Carmen*" when at this stage of her career the soprano can be paraphrased (in last December's *High Fidelity*) as "reported to be so pleased with her performance as Carmen that she is thinking of undertaking the role in the opera house"?

More on this next month.

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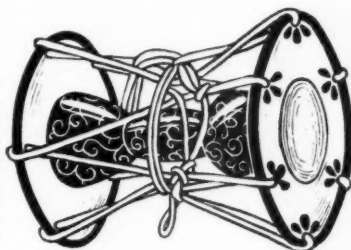
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BOOK REVIEWS

A boon for Handelians—the relentless inquisitive scholarship of Winton Dean

Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques, by Winton Dean. Oxford University Press, \$20.20.

By GEORGE LOUIS MAYER

IT IS impossible to overemphasize the importance of Winton Dean's exhaustive study of Handel's dramatic oratorios and masques. He has boldly, and with a clear head, undertaken to re-examine these works in depth and to reevaluate their importance in the light of his findings. By studying the details of their composition, the circumstances of their original performances, their intention and their worth, Dean has delivered unto us a mass of positive data and some judicious conclusions which, no matter how distasteful they may be to the Handel traditionalist (in the worst sense), cannot be ignored. He has doomed the traditions and misconceptions which have clouded and confused the real importance of these mighty works for generations. These have not been swept away by guesswork or generalizations but by relentless, inquisitive scholarship. It is high time that we cease paying homage to the Handel image created by our Victorian forefathers and begin to revere the composer himself and for the right reasons.

The eighteen works Dean concerns himself with do not include *Messiah*, *Israel in Egypt*, or *Alexander's Feast*, which are clearly non-dramatic oratorios. The works on Biblical and classical subjects which he does consider belong to another category entirely. The reluctance on the part of many Handel admirers to admit that their idol is something less than a religious composer whose works bear spiritual and mystical messages is probably the main reason why these other oratorios are so seldom performed. For the music, in any-

thing like an accurate performance, belies this belief. Dean calls Handel "the least subjective and least mystical of composers". The composer is at his best and most inventive when responding to the dramatic possibilities of the librettos based on Biblical subjects, and at his most perfunctory when called upon to exhibit depth of religious feeling. This has nothing to do with Handel's own beliefs but merely what he, as an artist, best responded to when in the process of composition. Distortion can be the only reward of approaching these works with a frame of reference which does not apply.

The dramatic conception and execution of these eighteen works put them in closer relationship to opera as we know, understand, and enjoy it today than to the so-called operas by the same composer. Handel's operas conformed to the deadly conventions of *opera seria* which reigned supreme at the time. These conventions smothered drama and made character development impossible by consistently putting the emphasis on devices which would permit virtuoso singing. Dean asserts that the "total impression made by Handel's operas is one of frustrated genius". And adds that the composer "stumbled on to the oratorio as an outlet for his dramatic gifts and inclinations".

While *Esther* was the only one of these dramatic oratorios staged during Handel's lifetime, there is every indication that these works would fare well on the stage. Experiments over the years have been very successful in proving this point. Just recently, when the oratorios *Semele* and *Samson* were staged in London at the same time that his opera *Rodelinda* was revived, there was the opportunity for comparing the two forms—and the oratorios proved

to be the most stageworthy. Many of the oratorios bear stage directions and contain musical episodes which gain their rightful dramatic values only when seen on the stage. Dent has admitted the debt he owes to the understanding of these works by having seen them staged. But whether staged or not, no performance of these works can have validity unless the dramatic qualities which saturate these scores are given full attention. The singers for whom Handel wrote his oratorios were not the virtuoso opera singers of the day but the secondary singers, most of whom had first been trained for the stage and who were more notable for the expressiveness of their singing than for the quality of their voices. Unlike the opera of the day, the dramatic oratorio was, in Dean's words, an "independent art form demanding teamwork and dramatic consistency". And, as he further points out: "There is no warrant for fathering on Handel the professional oratorio singer of Victorian and later times".

Dean's book is in two parts. The first part surveys the checkered history of the

oratorio before Handel and considers Handel's works from both musical and sociological viewpoints. He discusses the librettos, the autographs, the places of performance, and other background matters as well as such practical considerations as tempi, free embellishment, orchestration, etc. One of the finest chapters is "The Oratorios and English Taste". The second part of the book contains minutely detailed discussions of each of the eighteen works under consideration. These average about thirty pages each. In every case Dean analyzes the libretto as well as the music and also considers the history of the work's composition and performances. The autograph is discussed in connection with subsequent editions and the discussions are liberally sprinkled with musical examples. Appendices provide structural analysis, instrumentation, performances and places of performances during Handel's lifetime, the borrowings, pieces sung in Italian, variants in the text of *Esther*, cuts in librettos of *Samson*, Handel's oratorio singers, stage revivals, first lines of arias and duets, and a short bibliography. There is

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MAY 18 - JUNE 30
MAY 20 - JUNE 5
MAY 28 - JUNE 14
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JUNE 1 - JUNE 30
JUNE 7 - JUNE 18
JUNE 9 - JUNE 23
JUNE 15 - JULY 15
JUNE 24 - JULY 4
JULY 9 - JULY 31
JULY 10 - AUGUST 24
JULY 23 - AUGUST 25
JULY 25 - AUGUST 31
AUGUST 1 - SEPTEMBER 15
AUGUST 7 - SEPTEMBER 9
AUGUST 13 - SEPTEMBER 7
SEPTEMBER 1 - SEPTEMBER 11
SEPTEMBER 12 - SEPTEMBER 26
SEPTEMBER 18 - OCTOBER 2
SEPTEMBER 18 - OCTOBER 4

To receive further details, as available, please direct a request to: Press and Information Service, European Association of Music Festivals, 122 Rue de Lausanne, Geneva, Switzerland

also an excellent index. One could not ask for more.

The value of this study to the Handel student and music lover is obvious. Dean has wisely detailed his findings, which are also of great value to the musician. Conductors, directors of choral societies, and singers are all well served. One does not expect professional musicians to be great scholars, but audiences have every right to expect that they will take the findings of such practical musicologists as Winton Dean to heart when they attempt the performance of these works. The lack of good editions is a great hindrance. Both publishing houses and performing organizations need to take up the challenges with which Dean has provided them.

This is not an easy book. It demands time and study. It is, however, never ponderous or dull. Dean writes with great facility and frequently with wit. His

criticism of other writings on the subject, as well as of past and present performance standards and traditions, is often harsh—but his abuse is reserved especially for the far greater abuses done to Handel's works by these often well-meaning but misguided individuals and groups. Both the literary and musical tastes of the author are of the highest. And if his judgment on works he considers mediocre often seems severe he must be commended for the innate honesty which prevents him from either underestimating or overestimating any score he discusses. He is consistently faithful to his own high standards.

The book is the result of ten years of exhaustive work on the subject. It was a decade well spent. Although this is an expensive item, it was an expensive one to produce and it is not overpriced. It is a worthy investment for anyone interested in Handel.

Other books received for review

THE CANTATAS OF JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH: Sacred and Secular, by W. Gillies Whittaker. 1,470 pages; 2,450 musical examples; two volumes. Oxford University Press, \$26.90.

A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS, text and 1,000 illustrations by Roger Tory Peterson. Sponsored by the National Audubon Society. Second Revised and Enlarged Edition. Houghton Mifflin, \$3.95. (A corresponding two-record set entitled "A Field Guide to Bird Songs", containing the songs and calls of 305 species, has been published simultaneously by Houghton Mifflin at \$10. The bands are arranged to accompany this book page by page.)

JAPANESE MUSIC AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, by William P. Malm. Charles E. Tuttle Co., Tokyo and Rutland, Vermont. Price in U. S. A., \$8.75.

THE COMPLETE BOOK OF 20TH CENTURY MUSIC, edited by David Ewen. (New and Revised Edition). Prentice-Hall, \$7.50.

DICTIONARY OF MODERN BALLET, edited by Francis Gadan and Robert Maillard; American Editor, Selma Jeanne

Cohen; with an Introduction by John Martin. Tudor, \$7.95.

THE COLLECTOR'S TCHAIKOVSKY AND THE FIVE, by John Briggs. J. B. Lippincott (Keystone paperback series No. KB-9), \$1.45.

BEETHOVEN'S BELOVED: A Search for the Lost Love of Ludwig van Beethoven, by Dana Steichen. Doubleday, \$6.95.

LYRICS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, by Ira Gershwin. Alfred A. Knopf, \$5.

PLEASE DON'T HATE ME: The Gay Confessions of an Unpredictable Musician, by Dimitri Tiomkin and Prosper Buranelli. Doubleday, \$3.95.

THE NUTCRACKER BALLET, by Pigeon Crowle. Pitman, \$4.50.

BALLET, by Walter Terry. Dell (Laurel Edition LX-112, paperback), 75c.

JEWS IN MUSIC, by Arthur Holde. Philosophical Library, \$5.

CALENDAR OF MUSICAL ACTIVITIES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (to June 1, 1960). Paperback; available only from The President's Music Committee, 734 Jackson Place, N. W., Washington, D. C., \$1.

SOUND IDEAS

An Equipment Review

By LARRY ZIDE

Heathkit Four-Track Stereo Tape Recorder, Model TR-1AQ

THE HEATH Company, probably the major manufacturer of high-fidelity kits, has submitted its TR-1A series tape recorder kit, in a four-track stereo version. The four-track system (which is the system in which commercially recorded tapes are now being released) places four tracks side by side along the width of the tape. When the tape is played, tracks one and three are utilized first as the stereo pair; at the conclusion of the reel the filled reel is switched with the empty one, and tracks two and four are played. Commercial two-track tapes were limited to about forty-five minutes of play; in the four-track system the same tape can now accommodate up to ninety-odd minutes.

The Heath TR-1AQ kit plays and records four-track stereo tapes. It will also play the still-available two-track tapes, though not so well as some machines which either shift the playback head or contain separate two-track playback heads. Two-track tapes played on the Heath unit have considerably less volume on one channel. Equalizing the gain causes the one channel raised to have somewhat more noise than the other channel. Since many tapes are recorded at very low level this can be troublesome. For a collection of four-track tapes this

should provide no real obstacle, however.

As a kit, the TR-1AQ was not difficult to build. The transport mechanism, which should be constructed first, took about five hours. Heath's construction manual is a model. No details are left to chance, and clear illustrations abound. The one discrepancy I found occurred in the second step. In my sample, the motor casing was reversed, making it impossible to mount according to the instructions. It should be noted that the motor oil hole is to be lined up with the hole in the motor bracket. Other than this, the transport went together extremely easily. Since many stereo preamplifiers contain tape head inputs, the transport can be used for playback of recorded tapes upon its completion—that is, if you possess such a stereo preamp.

The record-playback electronics kit supplied by Heath is of very high quality. I found no constructional problems. A word of caution, however: because extensive printed circuitry is involved here, for the best results use a low-wattage soldering pencil to prevent scorching the printed board. Heath's manual gives an excellent lesson in soldering technique. It took me about eight hours to construct one electronics kit. Two must be built for the stereo recorder.

As a performer, the TR-1AQ is surprisingly good considering the low cost.



HEATH FOUR-TRACK STEREO TAPE RECORDER, MODEL TR-1AQ

Frequency Response: ± 3 db 40 to 15,000 cps at $7\frac{1}{2}$; ± 3 db 40 to 10,000 cps at $3\frac{3}{4}$
Flutter and Wow: .21 RMS at $7\frac{1}{2}$; .28 RMS at $3\frac{3}{4}$
Maximum Reel Size: 7 inch
Motor: 4-pole induction
Distortion: 2% or less, at normal recording level (.25 V input)
Signal to Noise: 40 db or better
Price: \$149.95 plus shipping (36 lbs.) from Benton Harbor, Michigan

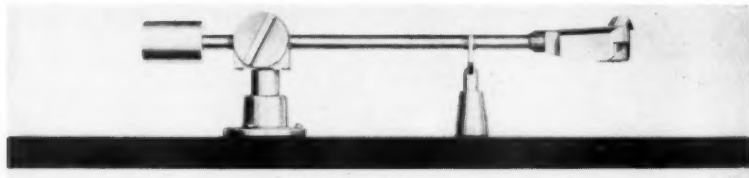
As a recorder, at the 7½ ips. speed, the unit provided a very close likeness to the original. There was only slightly more high-frequency roll-off than on high-priced professional-like machines. Noise was quite low, inaudible except at very high listening levels. Speed stability was very good, with only slight instability apparent at the end of narrow hub reels. As a playback machine the unit performed very well, playing commercial tapes with very wide range. I found frequency response very close to the NARTB equalization curve, well within the manufacturer's specifications. Again, as a recorder, the Heath unit completely erased

recorded tapes. There are many quality machines that erase incompletely. All controls were smooth and positive, the "magic eye" recording indicator was effective, and an interlock prevents accidental erasure of recordings. Finally, the kit provides plenty of extra shielded interconnecting cable.

The TR-1AQ is the equivalent of many machines at more than twice the price. It provides genuine high fidelity, low-distortion performance at the 7½ ips. speed. Adjustment of a belt also provides the 3¾ ips. speed, primarily useful at this time for speech recording, or where maximum tape economy is essential.



AUDIO-EMPIRE STEREO CARTRIDGE, MODEL 88
 Frequency Response: 20-20,000 cycles ± 2 db
 Output Voltage: 5 millivolts per channel
 Channel Separation: more than 20 db
 Inductance: 500 millihenries
 DC Resistance: 1000 ohms
 Weight: 9 grams
 Compliance: Vertical and Horizontal 5×10^{-6} cm/dyne
 Dynamic Mass: less than 0.7×10^{-3} grams
 Stylus: .7 mil radius diamond
 Terminals: 4 terminal output
 Mounting: standard 7/16 or 1/2 inch mounting centers
 Price: \$24.50



AUDIO-EMPIRE MODEL 98 ARM

Maximum Tracking Error: $\pm .75^\circ$
 Arm Resonance: 12 cps ± 2 db
 Over-all Arm Length: 12¼"
 Arm Offset Angle: 23.8°
 Calibrated Stylus force adjustment: 0-8 grams
 Micro Ball Bearing vertical and lateral friction:

Virtually Unmeasurable
 Vertical Height Adjustment: 1¼"
 Counter weight zero balance adjustment for any cartridge:
 from 2-25 grams
 Price: \$34.50;
 16" Version, \$38.50

Audio-Empire Stereo Cartridge Model 88 and Arm, Model 98

AUDIO-EMPIRE is a new name to the high-fidelity field, having been introduced to the public just a few months ago. But the parent company, Dyna-Empire, Inc., is a major manufacturer of specialized military products such as sonar transducers, jet engine controls, and sub-miniature hearing-aid microphones. In a recent tour through their plant, I was deeply impressed by the equipment available to the new Audio-Empire division. I saw one of the finest precision machine shops around, machines

capable of tolerances far greater than might be encountered in the home high-fidelity field. In short, though new to high fidelity, this is no small operation. Herb Horowitz, who heads the new division, is a well-known and respected designer and engineer in the audio field.

These products exhibit the kind of careful design and workmanship that might be expected from this sort of firm.

The Empire 98 arm is a dynamically-balanced arm made of non-ferrous metals. Dynamic balancing is probably the best solution to arms designed for home use. Arms using this design need not be leveled

to track properly. (As with all arms they should, of course, be leveled in relation to the turntable; this is pretty much automatic if the motor board is not warped and the arm is adjusted to the correct height.) The amazing fact about a dynamically-balanced arm is that it will track properly at any angle of turntable position. It will even track perfectly with the turntable and arm upside down (provided you glue the record to the turntable so that it doesn't fall off).

In use, after a cartridge is installed in the removable head of the arm, the arm is then balanced to zero by adjusting the rear counterweight. It is locked by a set-screw. After zero balance is achieved the correct stylus pressure is *dial*ed on the single control knob located at the pivot. The dial is calibrated in one-gram steps. I found its accuracy far better than within $\frac{1}{4}$ gram, the best accuracy I can claim for the balance I used. Stylus pressure is achieved by means of a coiled clock spring which exerts a force extremely close to the theoretical center of mass. What all this means is that the stylus pressure remains constant when playing warped records. Further, a high-quality coiled clock spring is not likely to lose tension upon aging. All motion of the arm is through ball bearings that need no lubrication.

As a performer the Empire 98 is all that an arm should be. It adds no sound of its own. Measured resonance was far below audibility and of very low intensity. (I found roughly a $2\frac{1}{2}$ db peak at about 12 cycles; this is an excellent measurement.) Tracking error was very low, too, making for excellent inner-groove reproduction. In sum, these features allowed most cartridges to track at least a gram better than in most other arms. Rounding out the fine design was an arm-rest, adjustable in height, and with a locking feature to secure the arm if desired.

I firmly believe the Audio-Empire 98 arm to be the best value on the market today. There are several other arms that perform as well, but no other arm combines top performance with unusual convenience to quite the same degree.

Like the arm, the new Empire 88 cart-

ridge is an excellent product. I found it extremely smooth, clean, and natural-sounding. It produced music with a high degree of freedom from strain. Channel separation was excellent even at high frequencies, where many cartridges fall apart completely. Needle talk was almost inaudible, and inner-groove sound near the end of a record remained as free from break-up as with any cartridge I have heard. Measured frequency response, too, was excellent. I found response smooth and peak-free from 30 cycles to over 16,000 cycles \pm 2db. In the Empire arm the cartridge tracked almost all records at just over 2 grams.

The one serious problem I had with this cartridge, and I fear this problem can be overwhelming for some, was that of induced hum. The cartridge was more sensitive to hum pickup from amplifier power transformers than almost any other I have heard. It simply cannot be used in any installation in which it is placed closer than three or four feet from an amplifier or preamplifier power transformer. Except for this, the Empire 88 would be an outstanding best buy. It still is if the record player is to be installed several feet from any other equipment.

The cartridge possesses one feature that may be of interest to the specialist. The manufacturer makes available a 78 r.p.m. stylus assembly for the cartridge. Since stylus change is quick, the cartridge can be used in those collections where a rare 78 is played. One other fact: If a stereo cartridge with a 78 stylus in it has one set of leads reversed and then is paralleled for monophonic use, *lateral* cancellation is achieved, while *vertical* response is maintained. This fact is of consequence to collectors looking for modern-quality cartridges to play ancient hill-and-dale vertical records.

To summarize: The Empire 98 arm is an outstanding value. The Empire 88 cartridge is an excellent one; if hum pickup is not likely to be a problem this is a cartridge that ranks with the very best. This problem is, I am sure, not unnoticed by the manufacturer. At such time as a modified cartridge is introduced, it will be reported on here.

Electro-Voice Aristocrat Enclosure Kit and 12TRX Speaker

CONSTRUCTION of the Aristocrat cabinet makes for a pleasant afternoon of work. All wood is completely pre-cut and ready for assembly with the provided glue and screws. The instructions are complete and satisfactory. Care should be taken, however, to read each step very carefully. A great deal of information is contained in each step, and it is easy to gloss over an important one.

The resulting cabinet is an effective, solid, folded corner horn, which uses the back wave of the speaker cone as a bass reinforcer. The Aristocrat *must* be used in a room corner to take advantage of its design. The cabinet mounts a twelve-inch speaker, with additional cutouts for E-V's mid-range and tweeter horns. All visible wood surfaces are of high-grade birch, a wood that lends itself well to a variety of finishes.

The 12TRX speaker is the senior twelve-inch speaker in the E-V line. Although advertised as a three-way system, it is actually a modified two-way system. An independent horn tweeter is mounted through the center of the double bass-midrange cone. Crossover from bass to midrange is accomplished mechanically while the mid to high crossover is accomplished electrically at 3500 cycles.

The combination of 12TRX and Aristocrat enclosure provide a high level of overall quality. Frequency response was essentially smooth from the upper limits

of audibility down to just above forty cycles. In the three- to eight-kilocycle range the system exhibited a mild plateau, which is responsible for the bright, live quality that characterizes most of E-V's products. Below forty cycles the system fell off sharply and cleanly with no audible doubling—a commendable achievement. To my ears, the system is quite clean throughout its range. The over-all quality is big, somewhat overbright, and a trifle steely-sounding. Violins have a lovely bite and sheen. I suspect that addition of the matching midrange horn would aid in controlling all the brightness that I find excessive. As I've mentioned many times before, speaker testing is a highly subjective business. All speakers flavor sound in some way. Some people prefer one flavor, some another. But gross distortion or frequency discrimination is obvious to the experienced ear. The E-V 12TRX is a high-quality sonic reproducer capable of competing successfully in its price class with almost anything available.

ELECTRO-VOICE ARISTOCRAT FOLDED-HORN ENCLOSURE KIT, MODEL KD 6

Finished size: 29 3/4" high X 19" wide X 15 3/4" deep

Shipping Weight: 36 lbs

Price: Kit \$39.00. Factory-built and finished—Mahogany:

\$72.00; Limed Oak or Walnut: \$79.00

ELECTRO-VOICE 12TRX

INTEGRATED 3-WAY SPEAKER SYSTEM

Frequency Response: 30 to 19,000 cps

Electrical Crossover: Separate, 3500 cps.

Power Handling Capacity: Program Material 25 watts;

Peaks 50 watts

Magnet Weight: 3 lbs, 7 oz.

Net Weight: 24 lbs.

Impedance: 16 ohms

Price: \$125.00



Fairchild SA-12 Stereo Transcription Arm

IN SEPTEMBER of 1959, I reviewed a complete Fairchild "front end" record playing system. The transcription arm evaluated at that time was the model 282, essentially a reworked version of the 280 series of monophonic arms. The new SA-12 represents a completely new design, from the base through the tubular body

FAIRCHILD SA-12 STEREO TRANSCRIPTION ARM
A mass-balanced, springless tone arm with a resistively isolated counterweight.

The arm features plug-terminated cables, in-view stylus mounting, plug-in cartridge slides, (one supplied) and a rear overhang of only 2 3/4". Price; \$34.95.

to the newly-designed plug-in head that accepts without modification (unlike the older design) all stereo and monophonic cartridges.

The SA-12 is a statically balanced arm; that is, there are no springs used. Stylus pressure is set by means of an adjustable counterweight at the rear of the arm. An arm of this type requires accurate leveling to insure proper groove contact. Toward that end, an accurate, easy-to-

read spirit level is built into the base of the arm. The base also contains Fairchild's new "cue-ing" device. This simple mechanism is used to lift the arm, as well as setting it down at the beginning of a record. It is an effective system for preventing butter-fingered gouging of delicate records.

Owners of older 282 arms will find conversion easy. The critical base-to-turntable center distance is exactly the same for both arms. The new arm, moreover, requires only a single 7/8" hole for mounting. The arm-lift device functions also as an arm rest.

Other desirable features include a completely wired set of output cables. After installation the arm is ready to be plugged into a preamp. The adjustable counter-

weight fits a thick screw thread which facilitates setting the correct stylus pressure. Once set the weight can be locked in place by means of a set screw. A special note on Fairchild's thoughtful design—the cartridge mounting slide is the first such unit I have yet come across which has cartridge connecting clips already soldered in place.

Tests for arm resonance revealed none in the audible spectrum. The arm performs exactly as it should; that is, it does not in any way affect the sound of the cartridge it contains. It is easy to install, a pleasure to operate, and handsome in appearance. The arm-lift device itself is worthy of special praise for its usefulness. The SA-12 is, in short, a worthy successor to the now retired 282.

Department of (Stereo Pre-) Amplification

LAST November, in the review of the Marantz stereo preamplifier, I made the following statement:

"It is axiomatic that tone controls, no matter how well designed, add some distortion to the over-all reproduction of sound".

Daniel R. von Recklinghausen, Chief Research Engineer for H. H. Scott, was one of several correspondents who pointed out the simple error of this statement. Put another way, a well-designed tone control most certainly does *not* add to the distortion of a unit. I did not intend to enter the never-ending controversy over step-switched versus continuous tone controls. If well designed, they are equally satisfactory for all practical purposes and a choice is mostly a matter of personal preference. If the switched control does allow for greater accuracy, the slight production variations that occur in continuous designs, thus preventing *absolute* accuracy, simply is of no *practical* difference.

To clarify one other point that Mr. von Recklinghausen brought up in his letter, I did not intend by my closing remarks to imply that high price and high quality are necessarily inseparable. The Marantz is the most expensive unit of its

kind and it is also, I believe, the best preamp on the market as of this writing, but I did not mean to suggest an automatic causal relationship between these statements.

Another letter worthy of comment came from Avery Fisher, President of the company that bears his name. Mr. Fisher wrote to say that owners or prospective purchasers of the Fisher X-101-A, a fine unit criticized here in October because it lacks a paralleling switch for monophonic disc play, may secure from Fisher Radio its Service Bulletin No. 11-59, which describes the construction of such a unit as an addition to the X-101-A. Mr. Fisher indicated that it is a policy at his company to make available to Fisher owners any information about new features which may be added to increase the versatility of their products. Toward that end the same Service Bulletin also shows how to add a center-channel output to power amplifiers and how to build a speaker phase-reversal switch. The instructions are such that anyone not wanting to "do it himself" can bring the Bulletin to a service man and have the controls constructed at (what should be) a nominal charge.

(Continued from page 419)

Orchestra, No. 1 in F minor, No. 2 in D minor, No. 3 in D, No. 4 in D minor; Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Anatole Fistoulari. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Vanguard VTF-1612, \$9.95.

THESE performances were reviewed in the issues of November, 1958, and March, 1959, respectively. Sonics here are marvelous: spacious and very smooth. The cloudiness observed in the Liszt disc is nowhere apparent on tape. Crosstalk was mildly annoying in *Scheherazade*.—P.C.P.

SCHUBERT: *Piano Quintet in A, Op. 114* ("Trout"); Frank Glazer (piano) and Harold Siegel (double-bass) with members of the Fine Arts Quartet. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Concertapes 4T-4004, \$7.95.

THOUGH not overly abounding in warmth, the performance is nevertheless a commendable one. This slight coolness is more than made up for by zestfully spirited

and agile playing. The whole is indeed sparkling. The engineering leaves little to be desired: crisp, close-in, very clean. In short, marvelously realistic. A bit of crosstalk is disturbing every now and then but not very much. —P.C.P.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Francesca da Rimini, Fantasia for Orchestra* (after Dante), *Op. 32; Hamlet (Overture and Fantasy)*; Stadium Symphony Orchestra of New York conducted by Leopold Stokowski. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Everest STBR-3011, \$7.95.

THESE performances are what one tends to expect of Stokowski: dramatic, colorful, exciting, luxuriant in richness of orchestral timbre. The sound is of a similar caliber: closer-in than is usual in Stokowski's recordings for Capitol, but reverberant enough to round off the edges and, above all, spectacular. The whole is marred only by some crosstalk problems, intensified, no doubt, by the high recorded level here. —P.C.P.

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TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64; Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36;* Bamberg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Heinrich Hollreiser. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Vox XTP 707, \$11.95.

THESE previously released performances are aided substantially here by the smoothness of Vox's tape sound. The Fourth Symphony, spectacular-sounding on disc, is a stunner on tape—close-in yet live, and super clean. A direct comparison between the stereo disc and tape versions of the Fifth Symphony demonstrated the great transparency and silkiness of the taping, especially in heavily recorded passages. The only real flaw here is crosstalk, which is annoying on parts of Side 2 (the Fourth Symphony). Both performances are excellent. —P.C.P.

VIVALDI: *The Four Seasons; I Solisti di Zagreb* conducted by Antonio Janigro. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Vanguard VTC-1611, \$7.95.

THIS superb performance is reported in the February, 1958, A.R.G. on page 264 (as a mono disc) and again on page 270 (as a stereo two-track tape). In its latest metamorphosis as a four-track tape the playing glistens as ever, enhanced by silky sonics and a low noise level. Tape hiss is evident but to no greater degree than usual on previous two-track releases. Crosstalk between "sides" is noticeable at times but not very annoying. —P.C.P.

Holidays for Percussion; New York Percussion Trio conducted by Ray Wright. Four Track 7½ ips. Stereo Tape, Vox XTB-705, \$6.95.

THIS is rather mild-mannered for percussion music; the arrangements are tuneful, easy-going, and quite corny. Multiple recording is used to allow all save one of the participants to do double duty in the noise-making. Included are such titles as *Turkey in the Straw*, *Drummer's Holiday*, *Sleigh Ride*, *Mexican Honeymoon*, and *Parade of the Wooden Soldiers*. The sound, of course, is the thing here, and is really excellent. Hi-fiers will revel in the crystal-clear transients and very sharp directionality in evidence throughout. —P.C.P.



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1954. With Brouwenstijn and Vinay, at that time still commanding the vocal resources required for Otello, and with the superb Concertgebouw under the masterful Krips, the performances were truly memorable in every respect. The part of Desdemona proved to be an ideal vehicle for Brouwenstijn's vocal art, while dramatically this was the only completely believable portrayal of the part I have ever seen. In the first act this Desdemona had a child-like innocence, but in the course of the opera she gradually matured to rise fully to the tragic heights of the drama in the final act. Especially memorable was the third-act duet, *Dio ti giocondi, o sposo*, and deeply moving was the passage *Io prego il cielo per te con questo pianto*. The look of understanding sympathy in Desdemona's eyes, when turning to Otello just before *Tu pur piangi*, was only one of an endless number of little touches that made the character come to unforgettable life. In the fourth act the Willow Song and the *Ave Maria* were not just two musical numbers, not just two opportunities for showing the beauty of a voice. Brouwenstijn sang the *Salce*, *salce* as simply and as unpretentiously as possible, yet with an ever-present current of nervous restlessness, while the *Ave Maria* was a prayer full of candor and sincere belief in divine justice. In the opera house or on records, I have never encountered another soprano who was able to imbue this scene with such a compelling atmosphere. The whole scene was recorded on Phi N 00712 R, coupled with *Ecco l'orrido campo* from "Ballo" (same as on the "Ballo" excerpts recording) and the Nile aria from "Aida". The "Otello" scene comes off very well on the recording and is a very worth-while buy. The Nile aria, beautifully sung, gives an impression of the soprano in another Verdi part she sings frequently in Holland and at Covent Garden. It has always seemed to me that Brouwenstijn's approach works less wonders with the Ethiopian slave-princess than with other Verdi heroines, but her interpretation and singing of the part was always very rewarding. The Nile aria was also issued on Phi 402 017 NE, coupled with the second Amelia aria from "Ballo",

Morro, ma prima in grazia, again identical with the one included in the "Ballo" excerpts on Phi N 00713 R.

Under Krips, Brouwenstijn also sang the Countess and Donna Anna in Mozart's "*Le Nozze di Figaro*" and "*Don Giovanni*", respectively. They were both highly imaginative and well-sung interpretations, but nobody could or would deny that the soprano's vocal and dramatic gifts were shown to more advantage in works by other composers.

Meanwhile Brouwenstijn's fame had begun to spread. She appeared regularly at Covent Garden, London, where she sang in "*Aida*", "*Ballo*", "*Tosca*", and "*Trovatore*". In 1955 she was chosen by Rafael Kubelik to appear in "*Otello*", the highly successful opening production of his reign as musical director of the London opera house.

The year before, 1954, had marked Gré Brouwenstijn's debut at Europe's Wagner shrine, the Bayreuther Festspiele. She appeared as Elisabeth in the opening performance of the season, Wieland Wagner's controversial new production of "*Tannhäuser*". Others in the cast were: Vinay, later Windgassen (Tannhäuser), Fischer-Dieskau (Wolfram) and Greindl (Landgraf). Of all the parts Brouwenstijn sang during the three seasons she appeared at the Bayreuth Festspielhaus, Elisabeth was without doubt the most successful. Next to the unforgettable Wolfram of Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, her radiant Elisabeth dominated the performance. Bayreuth visitors will know how carefully Wieland Wagner works with his performers on the action in the operas. He tries to eliminate all meaningless moving around on stage, and to concentrate the action in a few very expressive gestures and movements. In the four festivals I attended at Bayreuth I have seen only three ladies who knew how to give full expression to Wieland's difficult stage directions: Rysanek (as Senta), Mödl (as Brünnhilde and Kundry), and Brouwenstijn. I still remember the thrill and the impact when, after the orchestral introduction to the second act the curtains swept open to reveal the enormous Hall of Song with in the center a radiant Elisabeth, standing erect with both arms bent and her

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hands close together in front of the breast and with a face that was all expressiveness: the sheer embodiment of rapture and joy. The only action that occurred during the aria was a spreading out of the arms and a step forward on *Sei mir gegrüßt*. Nothing could have been more right, and it certainly could not have been realized more convincingly. Brouwenstijn's singing of the part was wonderfully expressive, and her plea for Tannhäuser at the end of the act was as moving as the *Dich, teure Halle* had been joyful and exciting. At the première I heard an elderly French gentleman, obviously a regular visitor at Bayreuth for many years, say to his wife, talking about Gré Brouwenstijn: "*Ah, quelle voix... et quelle charme!*" An elegant compliment to the beauty of the vocal as well as the visual aspects of her performance. Elisabeth's Prayer was sung with great intensity and nobility. One can find an echo of this performance in the soprano's Verdi-Wagner recital on Phi A 000 386 L, where she sings both Elisabeth arias. The beautiful prayer *Allmäch't'ge Jungfrau!* is particularly successful. *Dich, teure Halle*, too, is well-recorded, though some of the excitement of the performance is missing. On the same side of the record the soprano sings Elsa's Dreams and Senta's Ballad.

At the 1955 Bayreuther Festspiele, Brouwenstijn repeated her Elisabeth and sang her first Sieglinde. It was a deeply-felt, at times exciting portrayal that had grown in stature by 1956, when she was able to cope completely with the second act. Rarely have I heard Sieglinde's lines in the third act so beautifully phrased and so excitingly delivered. In addition to Sieglinde the soprano sang in 1956 Freia, Gutrune, and Eva. Brouwenstijn sang her first Eva in a new production of "*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*". It was a charming portrayal, though parts like Sieglinde and Elisabeth can show her gifts in a more rewarding way. After 1956 the soprano decided not to return to Bayreuth, because the long rehearsal periods kept her too much away from her family in Amsterdam.

The second side of the Wagner-Verdi record features *D'Amor sull' ali rose*

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from "*Il Trovatore*", *Son giunta—Madre, pietosa vergine*, and *Pace, pace, mio Dio* from "*La Forza del Destino*" and *Tu che le vanita* from "*Don Carlo*". Brouwenstijn had added the parts of Elisabetta in "*Don Carlo*" and Leonora in "*La Forza*", as well as an outstanding Tatiana in "*Eugen Onegin*", to her repertoire in the years 1954-56. All the excerpts are well sung, especially the "*Trovatore*", and they give a nice impression of Brouwenstijn as an interpreter of Verdi heroines, though the "*Ballo*" excerpts are to be preferred. The aria from "*Don Carlo*" evokes memories of the wonderful production of that opera by Luchino Visconti at Covent Garden in 1958, with a cast that included Brouwenstijn, Barbieri, Vickers, Gobbi and Christoff, and with Carlo Maria Giulini as conductor.

The Covent Garden "*Don Carlo*" was not the first production in which Brouwenstijn sang under Giulini. In the previous year the Holland Festival had brought them together in performances of Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* of which the fiery conducting of Giulini and the superb singing of Brouwenstijn were the outstanding fea-

tures. Philips has issued—on Phi A 00284/285 L—a recording of this Requiem with Brouwenstijn, von Hovsay, Munteanu, and Czerwenka as soloists with the chorus and orchestra of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia di Roma under Paul van Kempen. Though the soprano and the mezzo do some beautiful singing, the performance as a whole cannot stand comparison with the Toscanini or von Karajan recordings. It is to be hoped that Brouwenstijn will be able to record the Requiem again under more favorable conditions.

The only recording featuring Gré Brouwenstijn which has been issued in this country is that of d'Albert's "*Tiefland*" on Epic SC-6025 (see ARG, July 1958). A few months after the recording was made, the soprano sang the role of Martha for the first time on stage in an extremely exciting revival in Amsterdam. Though this opera hardly can be called a great work of art—it is an incredible concoction of bits in the style of the early Wagner and of Richard Strauss—Brouwenstijn succeeded in making the performances of this German "*Cavalleria Rusticana*" into very worthwhile experiences. Her singing was of the highest order. The recording catches much of the atmosphere of her performances, and one cannot help but get excited and be moved by the soprano's expressive singing and her imaginative interpretation. It is a pity that some of the most rewarding passages for the soprano have been cut. This "*Tiefland*" and the "*Ballo*" excerpts are certainly the recordings that give the most nearly complete impressions of Gré Brouwenstijn in opera.

At present Brouwenstijn is a regular guest in many European opera houses. Stuttgart admired her as Leonore in Wieland Wagner's controversial staging of "*Fidelio*"; Vienna sees her regularly as Tosca, Amelia, Sieglinde and Leonore. She has appeared in Paris, Barcelona, in Italy and, of course, at Covent Garden. She traveled to Buenos Aires for performances as Eva and Leonore under Beecham. In The Netherlands she recently added Elsa and a highly-praised Madeleine de Coigny in "*Andrea Chenier*" to her repertoire. Last summer she made her

debut with the Glyndebourne Festival Opera as Leonore.

To an artist with Brouwenstijn's sincerity, her perception and her feeling for and her interest in the human aspects of a role, the part of Leonore in Beethoven's "*Fidelio*" is a real challenge. Like perhaps no other role in the entire operatic repertoire, that of Leonore demands a complete identification with the character involved. To be successful as Leonore, a soprano must have great vocal capabilities, but above all she must have a heart, and a gift for interpretation, that will raise her portrayal somewhere near the nearly unapproachable level of Beethoven's unique tribute to conjugal love.

Leonore has become one of Gré Brouwenstijn's greatest interpretations. In my opinion it is her greatest. Vienna called her Leonore "the best we have seen since the days of Lehmann", and reports from Glyndebourne hailed her as "the finest Leonore on the operatic stage today". The performances of "*Fidelio*" I saw with Brouwenstijn as Leonore, even the regular repertory performances in Amsterdam, are among the most profoundly moving experiences I have ever had in the theater. From her first entrance her *Fidelio* is completely convincing. Not for one moment could one doubt her determination in her heroic task. Her *Abscheulicher! wo eilst du hin?* is an emotional and vocal highlight, but Brouwenstijn's performance reaches its peak in the second act. The incredible tension and anxiety she creates before recognizing her imprisoned Florestan; the tender care when, nearly breaking down in tears, she brings him some bread; her impassioned cry of *Tödt erst sein Weib!* and, afterwards, through tears of relief, her affirmation to Florestan, *Ja, sieh' hier Leonore*—are all part of a really great operatic performance.

There have been plans for a recording of "*Fidelio*" with Gré Brouwenstijn, and with Karl Böhm as conductor. These plans seem to have been abandoned. One can only hope that some record company will assume the responsibility to preserve at least the sound of this truly great interpretation.

THE MONTH'S JAZZ

Martin Williams is our chief jazz critic. Joe Goldberg and Larry Gushee are associate jazz critics. The responsibility for this column is sometimes divided, sometimes rotated, among them.

Charlie Parker: *Historical Recordings, Vol. 1. Le Jazz Cool JC-101, \$5.98.*

▲APPARENTLY, there will always be someone to discover new Parker material to release. This LP, which sounds as though it had been recorded in clubs, is particularly welcome. For one thing, coming in the middle of a huge welter of gospel-funk, it is interesting to hear Parker play a few commenting phrases at the end of *Cool Blues* that are striking by comparison with the rest of his work here, yet incisive enough to have dictated the style of several young saxophonists. That leaves a great fund of lyricism (Lee Konitz); a sense of humor combined with the ability to blend an interpolation into the main body of the solo, such as happens a few times here with *Carmen* (Paul Desmond can do this), the ability to make a musical point by the use of inflected notes (Sonny Rollins), indulgence in pyrotechnics (Cannonball Adderley)—several quite excellent musicians have been able to seize upon facets of his style to forge their own, but no one has possessed the combination of these elements as he did, and no one, except his “constituent” Dizzy Gillespie, as Parker once called him, has had the fantastic rhythmic sense. On this record, Parker solos to much greater length than on his commercially-made records. The playing, particularly on the first side—despite a moment on *Cool Blues* when he is in trouble—is some of his best. While there is no personnel listed, I would be tempted to say that, on *Ko Ko*, *Cool Blues*, *Ornithology I*, and *'Round Midnight* (the liner says that *Midnite* was never recorded by Parker, but he did it for Prestige, playing tenor with Miles Davis) you can hear Fats Navarro and very good Bud Powell. The remaining tracks, which include two actual firsts, *Move* and a sardonic jump-band version of *White Christmas* (the perfect gift, fellows and girls, for your buddies who like jazz!), sound like early, not-too-good Miles Davis. A thought that one is left with after listening to this record is the great difference between Parker, playing such a short time ago,

and the musical giants of today. Take, for instance, Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis, and John Lewis, all of whom played with Parker, and all of whom have chosen quite consciously not to use several of the techniques available to them on their instruments, preferring to mine over and over again, the same deep but narrow veins. In contrast to this, Parker, with his great joy in the capacities of his instrument, is wondrously refreshing. —J.G.

•
Dizzy Gillespie. *Have Trumpet, Will Excite!* Verve MGV-8313, \$4.98.

▲ON Dizzy Gillespie's most recent recording, made with the quintet he has been fronting in person recently (Junior Mance, piano; Les Spann, flute and guitar; Sam Jones, bass; Lex Humphries, drums) he is in the peculiar position of playing with men whose experience comes from working with soloists influenced by men who were originally disciples of Gillespie. There are several generations of jazz present here: the flute and Junior Mance's Silver-styled piano are from the current trends, the use of the guitar goes back to Basie, some of the riffs are reminiscent of Goodman—but that, perhaps, is only of academic interest. In the matter of trumpet playing *per se*, there is still no one who can approach Gillespie's ability. On this record he appears lazy, playing in a casual, off-hand style replete with quotes. But he can do more without thinking about it than most soloists who are in dead earnest. What comes across most strongly is his amazing rhythmic sense (he is quoted on the liner notes as saying: “The basic thing about jazz music is putting the notes to rhythm, not the other way around.”), which manifests itself here in a sly, rocking swing, and an occasional absolutely precise placement of notes to achieve a charming relaxed effect—*Moonglow*, for instance, or my favorite on the set, *My Heart Belongs to Daddy*. This is a happy record—and would be rare for that reason alone—and nothing happens on it to astound you. It is also possible to quibble

with it, but why bother? Dizzy Gillespie has tossed off, almost in passing, a more pleasurable half hour than most of his clenched-teeth musical progeny could come up with at the top of their form. —J.G.

•
Claude Thornhill: *The Thornhill Sound*. Harmony HL-7088, \$1.98.

The Modern Jazz Society: *A Concert of Contemporary Music*. Verve 8131, \$4.98.

▲RECENTLY, because the composer-arranger has experienced a resurgence in jazz and claims a good bit of critical attention, the names of Gil Evans and John Lewis have become so prominent that I thought it might be worth-while to listen again to their first recorded efforts with large groups. Gil Evans, who is often somewhat erroneously referred to as a composer (he has actually done very little composition, his most notable attempts being a cross between *El Salón México* and blues called *Blues for Pablo*, and a piece called *Boplicity* that has an uneasy air of being in the wrong tempo), arranged these pieces for Claude Thornhill about ten years ago. They make an exceptional dance band set, lying about halfway between jazz and out-and-out popularization. They feature the same very personal voicings and harmonics that Evans does today, and prove, if only by their similarity to his current work, that the jazz revolution taking place in that ten-year period had very little to do with Evans. In accord with this, his treatment of three Charlie Parker tunes, particularly when Thornhill takes his piano solos with a guitar in the rhythm section, drags Parker bodily back into the Basie era his music had just emerged from. As for the rest of it, there are superior danceable ballads, a version of a Tchaikovsky theme that is almost good enough to withstand its "swinging the classics" stigma, an insipid tune called *Sorta Kinda* containing a Gene Williams vocal that reminds you of the days when the radio announcers used to say "And now, coming to you from the Starlight Roof. . .", and, on the Parker tunes, you can hear Lee Konitz on alto, practicing the Tristano intervals he was just then learning.

The Modern Jazz Society was an organization which, late in 1955, was to give a concert of the music on this record. The concert, for reasons I no longer recall, did not take place. However, here is the record, containing five John Lewis compositions played by a nine-piece group including Stan Getz (or Lucky Thompson), Tony Scott, J. J. Johnson, Percy Heath, and Connie Kay. Two pieces Lewis has written for the Modern Jazz

Quartet—*Django* and *The Queen's Fancy*—were orchestrated for the larger group by Gunther Schuller, who is to be heard playing French horn. He does no particular justice to either of them, and I am especially puzzled by his use of Janet Putnam's harp as the equivalent of a Basie rhythm guitar. The remaining three pieces—*Midsommer*, *Sun Dance*, and *Little David's Fugue*—were written for the concert and recorded here for the first time. Since then, of course, most of this music has seen great service. The MJQ has recorded *Midsommer* (one of Lewis' least affecting works) and the wonderful *Sun Dance*, which is more effective in this original version. Schuller orchestrated *Fancy* for Lewis' recording with the Stuttgart Symphony and *Django* is by now a classic. The only rarity (to my knowledge, this is the only recording) and therefore the main point of interest on the record, is *Little David's Fugue*. While containing definite pastiche elements of Bach that Lewis has since done away with in his fugues, it is still a jaunty and eminently attractive piece, worthy of being heard and, possibly, recorded by the Quartet. —J.G.

•
John Lewis: *Odds Against Tomorrow*. United Artists UAL-4061, \$4.98.

▲SPEAKING once of another John Lewis composition, Gunther Schuller said: "In a very simple, unspectacular way he combines the romantic and the classical in a judicious blending. His great melodic gift is very much in evidence. John has that rare ability to create a melody which is thoroughly conventional, immediately hummable, sounds as though one had heard it somewhere before, and yet is in fact absolutely original."

That quotation could just as easily apply to the score for the motion picture *Odds Against Tomorrow*. Unfortunately, I have not seen the picture, and so cannot comment on its appropriateness to the dramatic line—which is, after all, the main job of work of this music—but certain things can be surmised from a general knowledge of the plot. Lewis has hit upon the precise familiar, evocative technique for at least three of the episodes—a carousel scene, skating in Central Park, and one dealing with an ignorant Southerner, for which he uses a back-country guitar.

The score has astonishing variation: at times (and this is John Lewis' special bent) it reveals influences going as far back as Dowland and Campion, and at other times it could only be termed modern jazz. All of it is immediately identifiable as the work of John Lewis—no one else writes in quite this way. Of par-

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ticular note is the way that jazz is completely integrated into the concept of programmatic music, sliding in and out almost imperceptibly. On many occasions, the transitions are left to the hands of soloist Milt Jackson, whose work on the entire album is impeccable. Two other members of the Modern Jazz Quartet are also present: drummer Connie Kay and bassist Percy Heath. The piano, since Lewis conducts, is by Bill Evans, who is, where someone is needed who can both solo effectively and read a complex score, probably the best man in the country.

In a few places, the music sounds pretentious or over-reliant on cue-music clichés, and many selections are too short to be completely satisfactory. But the score does have considerable interest, and is important as a further example of the widening interests of John Lewis, who is, as always, a man to watch. —J.G.

John Coltrane and Paul Quinichette.

Cattin'. Prestige 7158, \$4.98.

▲THIS record, to judge from the sound of it, was made at least two years ago. It is reviewed here primarily as a warning to those who tend to run out and buy John Coltrane's latest release. Only the beginnings of this extremely important and exciting musician's conception are audible here, and he is involved in a meaningless tenor battle with Lester Young-like Paul Quinichette (hot vs. cool, I suppose) that vitiates whatever small amount of interest the record might otherwise have had. Extremely perfunctory work by Coltrane and who can blame him? For purposes of information, I might as well note that the pianist is Mal Waldron, who is interesting in that he organizes his solos in the jazz tradition in the same way that Brubeck does from outside it. Of three compositions attributed to Mr. Waldron, one is a blues, and the others are reworkings of *All The Things You Are* and *Yesterdays*. —J.G.

●
Bill Evans. *New Jazz Conceptions.* Riverside RLP 12-223, \$4.98. **Bill Evans.** *Everybody Digs Bill Evans.* Riverside RLP 12-291, \$4.98. **Bob Brookmeyer and Bill Evans.** *The Ivory Hunters.* United Artists UAL-3044, \$4.98.

▲EVANS is possessed of such consummate musicianship that anything short of complete acceptance might well be considered, with more than the usual justice, the failure of the reviewer rather than the musician. For that reason, and because the reservation is a purely subjective one, I will leave the quibbling till the last.

The best of these albums is the one called "Everybody Digs Bill Evans" It is noteworthy, in a branch of music that

consistently over-records young claimants to whatever thrones are available, that Evans recorded his first LP as leader ("New Jazz Conceptions") in September, 1956, and waited until December, 1958 for his second. He felt, during the intervening 27 months, that he did not have sufficiently new things to say to warrant recording forty minutes worth of music.

While the first album is far beyond the capacity of most pianists whose debut records you have heard, the growth in two years is astounding. Evans was well on his way to becoming an original the first time out, by 1958 he had definitely made it. He had worked with Miles Davis during those two years, an experience that has matured, as well as brought to a public notice that might otherwise have been longer in coming, many of today's top-rank jazz musicians.

The "Ivory Hunters" album is a two-piano set made with Bob Brookmeyer, and while another solo album might have been preferable, it shows Evans in the light of soloist as well as unusually empathetic sideman.

What makes Evans so unusual? First of all, he has an almost unparalleled virtuosity on his instrument, one that he keeps constantly in the service of his musical thought, never employing it for its own sake. In the exchanges with the rhythm section at the end of *Night and Day*, for instance, on RLP 12-291, he plays unaccompanied runs, both linear and chordal, that would be outside the range of most pianists, but these are not indulged in for their own sake. Elsewhere in the same album, on an original composition *Peace Piece*, which is the gem of all these sets, he essays a piece of French Impressionism, somewhat reminiscent of Debussy's *The Engulfed Cathedral*. Some might be tempted to say it is not jazz, but in at least one sense it is: it is pure improvisation. In an interview with Nat Hentoff in *The Jazz Review*, Evans said:

"It's completely free form. I just had one figure that gave the piece a tonal reference and a rhythmic reference. Thereafter, everything could happen over that one solid thing. Except for that bass figure, it was complete improvisation. We did it in two takes. Because it was totally improvised, I so far haven't been able to do it again when I've been asked for it in clubs."

Considering this, the stature of the piece, when compared with some work of the French composers, is nothing short of amazing.

Evans is very much his own man. His originals, the choice of his tunes, and the manner in which he plays them, show that he is making his decisions for himself. He has a magnificent touch and a sense of

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harmony that will enable him to produce *Peace Piece*, and rhythmic mastery that is responsible for such a solo as the one on George Russell's *All About Rosie*, on Columbia WL-127. The audible influences are not the usual ones: beside the French composers, you can hear Lennie Tristano, and only the English pastoral composers could be the inspiration for such an exquisite cameo as *Epilogue*, on RLP 12-891.

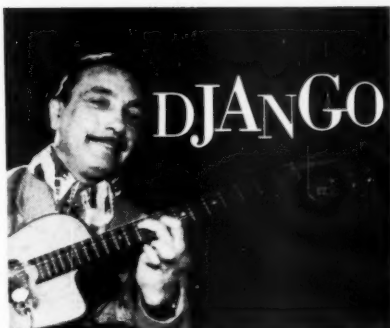
After these ecomiums, the reservation. Evans is always in the service of music, but only rarely, I think, in the service of himself. One searches in vain except for, perhaps, his last phrase before the entrance of the rhythm section on *The Man I Love*, in the "Ivory Hunters" album (when he suddenly weds the Gershwin of the larger works to the composer of the popular songs) for the inner depths of a man that forces music out of him, music that will strike the depths of a listener in a way that makes all the theorizing about music mere academic chatter.

—J.G.

●
Ray Charles. *The Genius of Ray Charles.* Atlantic 1312, \$4.98.

▲WHEN a musician attempts the interpretation of a piece of material, there are two basic choices open to him. Either he conforms to the needs of the material, or else he reshapes the material to fit his own personal style. On this record, Ray Charles' first vocal excursions outside the territory of rhythm-and-blues, both approaches are evident to varying degrees. The first side, featuring big-band arrangements by various men, all with a Basie feel, contains a rhythm-and-blues number, the spectacle of *Alexander's Ragtime Band* converted into a gospel song, and a fine, straightforward version of *When Your Lover Has Gone*, among other things.

The second side is composed of ballads, on which Charles is backed by a large string orchestra and chorus for which arrangements were written by Ralph Burns. It constitutes, to my mind, one of the most important and exasperating record dates in a very long time, evoking an emotion comparable only to some of the strings-and-chorus sessions perpetrated by Norman Granz upon the late Charlie Parker. The first three songs are all in the genre of the small Negro combos and dance bands to be found locally around the country. The remaining three give this record its importance, and contain hope for the only male interpreter of superior popular music to carry the emotional impact of Frank Sinatra. All of the arrangements are hopelessly banal and inadequate, saved only by Charles' piano, interfering with him every step of the way. But Charles comes through beautifully.



The Best of Django Reinhardt is the title and the contents of a monumental two-record album, Capitol TBO 10226.

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Don't Let The Sun Catch You Cryin' is almost in Charles' standard idiom. *Am I Blue*, which is for me the delight of the album, is almost unbearably poignant, with the same feeling of deep sensibility transcending limited vocal equipment that can be heard on Walter Huston's recording of *September Song*, or Adolph Green's of *A Quiet Girl*. On the final *Come Rain or Come Shine*, Charles justifies Harold Arlen's incessant flirtation with the blues by turning this song into a magnificent blues performance. I hope sincerely that Atlantic Records will have sufficient success with this album to warrant their finding an arranger as sensitive to Charles' needs as Nelson Riddle is to Frank Sinatra's and, with astute choice of material, producing what could be a truly great vocal album.

—J.G.

only brightening them with a discreet and simultaneous commentary which adds new levels to the old Greek.

Almost any words can be made into song if it is shown that the final expressive aim of the composer coincides with that of the text. Celius Dougherty put to music the definition of Love as found in the dictionary. This song makes a riotous encore.

Lou Harrison wrote an essay in Esperanto on chlorophyll, then set it to music for eight baritones and orchestra. It is disturbingly effective. John Cage took a long prose extract from *Finnegan's Wake* and arranged it for soprano on three notes only, accompanied by hand-tapping on every part of the piano save the keyboard. A moving piece indeed! Milhaud used the words of a flower catalogue for a charming cycle.

Those are a few exceptional variations on the theme of arbitrary procedure I have been trying to illustrate.

V

Let us recapitulate. The writer of songs is a special category of composer. He is not always capable of expressing himself in broader, more abstract instrumental terrains, any more than a symphonist is necessarily gifted in making the lone lyric page a totality.

A song writer cannot begin work until he has found what he feels to be appropriate poetry. The test lies in his ability to add a freshly necessary dimension to the poem with his music—can he clarify it to an audience through a singer?

Song is of greater magnitude than either text or music alone. The composer is concerned with words only insofar as they are related to music. Sometimes his comprehension of a poem is fully realized only after he has completed the fusion. Speaking for myself, the only poems I've ever really "understood" are those I've put to music. This understanding resembles that of the astronomer for whom stars change their meaning as he approaches.

When the composer has decided upon an appropriate poem he should inquire as to whether it is in Public Domain or still subject to copyright laws. He then examines the general nature of the text, sen-

sibly, stanzaically, metrically. His music will move either with or against the normal flow of the poem according to what permits the most poignant rendition. He takes care not to obscure comprehension of the words, but rather to illuminate them tastefully with regard to the dictates of rise-and-fall, of prosody and declamation, and of vowel and consonant properties.

The over-all nature of the text determines the contour of melody. Extreme points of a song's melody are, in turn, determined not only by an instinctive sense of "rightness" but also by knowledge of the most "telling" registers or tessituras of the vocal range for which it's written.

Behind this melody occurs an accompaniment as a subsidiary part of song, though recently it has come to have almost equal value with the solo voice.

Any competent craftsman can fabricate a flawless song in which every note is justified by some sort of musico-prosodic logic. One composer will undertake the writing carefully and slowly, with controlled manipulation not requiring "inspiration" (which comes in irregular spurts anyway). Another will produce his song in a fever of impulse with music spilling out all at once; in a single sitting, innately aware of his technical resources, he knits the sundry components of words and music into a "flawless" whole.

A professional has only a subconscious notion of his working methods once they are ingrained. He is in the happy position of not being obliged to give himself an explanation for his individual choices if their sum-total seems logical. It is for the theorist to inquire later into the *reasons* of choice; they may not necessarily jibe with those of the composer, or the composer may have forgotten them.

No work system guarantees a great song, although a well-trained musician can turn out a flawless one by academic standards. The magic touch is not summoned at will. But without it a writer of songs—whether he has a dazzling technique, a deeply intelligent notion of "what should be", even an unchecked inspiration—will deliver a stillborn imitation. A flawless song becomes great when it contains the secret breath of life.

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Unlikely Corners

WHY NOT LOOK below the surface occasionally and find out what it is in the direct appeal of the popular tune which makes the audience go home whistling; to see if there is not some artistic impulse hidden in unlikely corners. . .

—Ralph Vaughan Williams

THERE ARE many good things to say about the season's crop of original-cast albums. And having had the opportunity to hear them more than once only serves, taking into consideration the reception given them by some of the New York press, to bear out my last month's disquisition on the tin-eared drama critics. I don't mean to suggest that every note of every score is golden, or that each line of the lyrics is poetic wisdom, but all the scores somehow impressed me for some reason or other.

All critics were as one voice in their praise of the brilliantly amusing two-man show **At The Drop of a Hat** (Angel 35797), and rightly, too. Of course, the music is fairly basic, and most of the punch lies in the rapier-like lyrics (even drama critics can understand the words). There are some wonderfully off-hand, soft-sell Britishisms, highly intelligent, literate, and devastating. The presence of Michael Flanders and Donald Swann on these shores may help somewhat to assuage my growing Anglophobia brought on by the reviews of Kenneth Tynan in *The New Yorker*.

P. G. Wodehouse, too, is English, though he has long been around these parts. Even as early as 1917 he supplied the lyrics to the tuneful and sprightly Jerome Kern musical, **Leave It To Jane** (Strand Records SL-1002), only recently revived in Greenwich Village. The recording brings us such songs as the title number, *The Siren's Song*, *Cleopattarer*, *The Crickets Are Calling*, *The Sun Shines Brighter*, among other Kern-Wodehouse gems, all charmingly—and disarmingly—sung by the young contemporary original cast. The entire production is tasteful and artless, completely winning in every way.

Imagine my surprise when I listened to the score of **Take Me Along** (RCA

Victor LOC-1050) and really liked it. The songs by Bob Merrill are completely fitting to characters and the period setting alike. The orchestrations by Philip J. Lang are remarkably non-aggressive for a Broadway show and in no way detract from the simplicity of the songs themselves or destroy the turn-of-the-century charm. Merrill's score is by no means outstanding, but it is more than adequate. Though I'd rather skip over the Jackie Gleason contribution to the delights (for I think it is really minor), I might mention that he does enter into the spirit of things with a bit too much gusto and a rather harsh voice. He is at his best in a duet with Eileen Herlie, *I Get Embarrassed*. The real find for me is Miss Herlie's lovely lyric soprano, particularly when she appealingly raises it, vibrato and all, in a fine song, *We're Home*. Another excellent song, is *Nine O'Clock*, also sung by a non-singer, Robert Morse. In all, a most enjoyable collection of songs and performances.

When we come to the latest Rodgers and Hammerstein collaboration, **The Sound of Music** (Columbia KOL-5450), we arrive at a problem. To begin with, R&H are, of course, the critics' sitting ducks. There is nothing that inspires spite so much as steady success; this goes not only for the Tin Ears, but also for the chic young things and latter-day musical comedy buffs, who tend to sneer at the mere mention of Rodgers and Hammerstein. Pure and simple sentimentality can cloy, of course, and the staple of Rodgers and Hammerstein is this very thing. It is, to be sure, more readily discernible in the lyrics, and it is usually Hammerstein who comes in for most of the lumps, but the fact that Rodgers chooses to set the sentiments with fitting music is proof enough of his approval. Now to the score in question. While it generates no

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excitement, it is still good vintage Rodgers and Hammerstein; the title song is a masterful concoction, as are a couple of almost cynical duets—especially *How Can Love Survive*—sung by Marion Marlowe and Kurt Kasznar. Holding no brief for Mary Martin (she's just too damn charm-glutted for this world), I must admit that she is in fine fettle and voice here. And cute-as-all-hell kiddies invariably prove more an affliction than asset; combine them all, plus Mary Martin, in an itsy-poo song titled *Do-Re-Mi* and soon you get the feeling that you are in a fudge-coated living room. But this isn't the whole show, nor the whole score. "The Sound of Music" is on the whole one of the most attractive scores ever produced by Rodgers and Hammerstein; it is wonderfully sung by Mary Martin, Patricia Neway, Marion Marlowe, and everyone else. Happily, Columbia, with its usual intelligence about transferring a musical from stage to record, has preserved the marvelous opening with its sound of the many bells of an Austrian village, leading into the haunting modal song of the nuns leading in turn into the title song.

About the most lovable show of the season is **Fiorello!** (Capitol WAO-1321) which opens, appropriately, with the sound of a fire siren, and goes on from there to a series of delightful songs and performances. The score is the work of young composer Jerry Bock and young lyricist Sheldon Harnick; their songs fortunately were treated to the excellent orchestrations of Irwin Kostal. There are a number of fine voices in the cast, among them those of Ellen Hanley, Patricia Wilson, Eileen Rodgers, and Pat Stanley. Tom Bosley (LaGuardia) is well enough equipped in the vocal department, but his job is confined mostly to acting; still, hear his stirring *Unfair*, or stimulating *The Name's LaGuardia*, and you'll get some idea of what an excellent job he does do. There are a number of good songs, among them the lovely *When Did I Fall in Love* beautifully sung by Ellen Hanley; Pat Stanley's *I Love a Cop*, Patricia Wilson's *The Very Next Man*. Sheldon Harnick's lyrics are notable for a bite which suits the political setting and period (around World War I and the Twenties). The always dependable Howard Da Silva is superb in a dour delivery of *The Bum Wow*; likewise in the outraged innocence of *Little Tin Box*, wherein he and the politicians explain how they manage to live on thirty-five dollars a week and drive Rolls Royces.

The most exciting, and musically most rewarding original cast album, is **Saratoga** (RCA Victor LOC-1051) with songs by Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer. Both masters were in fine form when they

produced this score; but, as you may already know, the show was slaughtered by the critics. Happily, a miracle occurred on 24th Street (Victor's studios) under the supervision of producer Bob Bollard. To begin with, the book was immediately subtracted from the project and emphasis was put where it belongs—on the songs. A couple were even switched around, not adhering to the order as presented on the stage, to excellent effect for recording purposes. In fact, the Broadway production would be improved if it were to open, as does this album, with the sprightly *One Step, Two Step*. The second side, too, has a rousing opener in the title song. Side one contains a good lyric number, *Gettin' a Man* (sung by Carol Brice and Odette Myrtil), a show stopper (*Petticoat High*), a fine rhythm-ballad (*A Game of Poker*), a lovely, haunting ballad sung wistfully by Odette Myrtil, *Love Held Lightly*; and a marvelous trio, combining *Game of Poker* and *Love Held Lightly*, which closes side one wonderfully. The second side contains another couple of songs which show mainly what Johnny Mercer can do with a lyric: *Countin' Our Chickens* (nice tune, too,) and the good-humored, though deflating, *The Men Who Run the Country*, a disarmingly gentle commentary upon the robber barons of the recent past. Then, too, there are a couple of superior ballads, the Latin-flavored *You or No One*, sung by male lead Howard Keel, and a song that should prove—in time—to be one of the classics of popular song, *The Man in My Life*, beautifully lined out by female star Carol Lawrence. To Carol Brice falls the plum of the great art song, *Goose Never Be a Peacock*, which soars unforgettably; both music and lyrics of this song make it one of the outstanding of this year or any other, and Carol Brice sings it with authority and pathos, and a warm, rich, contralto. Near the end of the second side comes *Dog Eat Dog*, out of which develops the high point of Act II, the *Railroad Fight*. Taking Arlen's theme of *Dog Eat Dog*, Genevieve Pitot treats it to a Bartókian arrangement of great impact. Although not complete here as heard in the show, the music still conveys the raw brutality of the fight as well as the hero's befuddlement after being struck on the head. This is ballet music unlike any ever heard before in a musical. Contributing to the effectiveness of this last, plus all the other songs, is the guiding hand of conductor Jerry Arlen—who is a musician first and the composer's brother second. Listen carefully to the beautiful details of some of the better orchestrations by Philip J. Lang, particularly in the exquisite *Love Held Lightly*, and the unique *Goose Never Be a Peacock*, the

former with its bittersweet underscoring, and the latter with its bluesy, swaying chords. The score's very variety calls for a masterful orchestral command—this is not just another musical comedy score—and a fluent, quick, musical intelligence. Under the direction of Jerry

Arlen all the members of the company, as well as the orchestra, gave everything to the recording sessions, thereby saving all the brilliant efforts of Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer from oblivion should the public prove stupid enough to go along slavishly with the critics. —E.J.

READERS' RECORD EXCHANGE & MART

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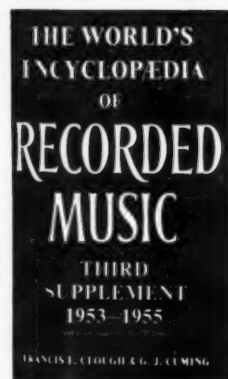
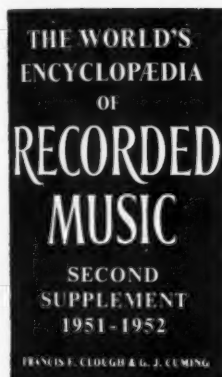
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